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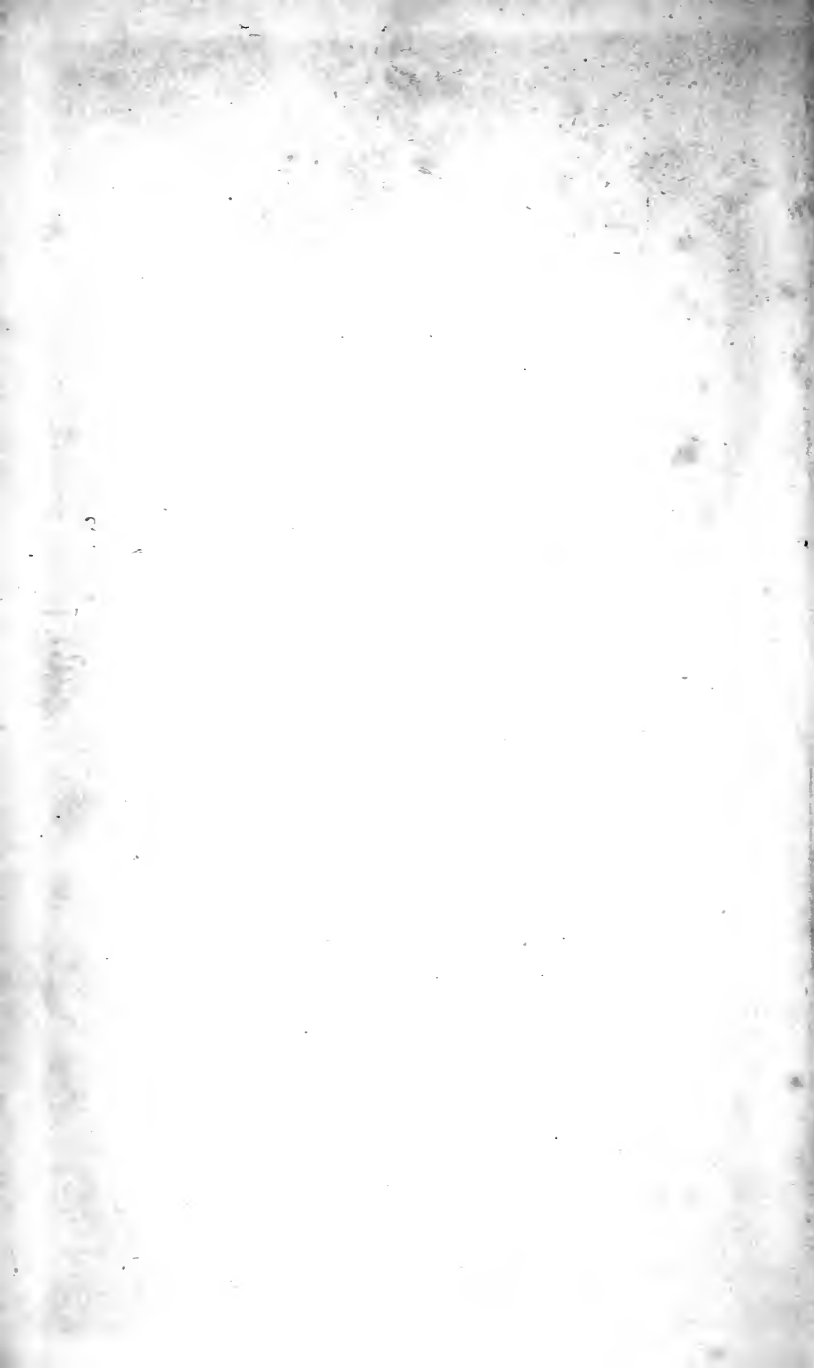
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Philip C. Sanby



SOCIETY IN A GARRISON TOWN.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“MYSELF AND MY RELATIVES,” &c.

“Tyranny is a great evil, and to give despotic power to any individual, is to encourage such an evil.”

VOL. I.

London :

T. CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,
30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE,
1869.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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TO

MISS M. R. DARBY SMITH,

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

WITH THE AUTHOR'S BEST REGARDS,

AS A SLIGHT TESTIMONY OF RESPECT

FOR

HER SYMPATHY WITH THE SUFFERING AND THE OPPRESSED,

OF WHATEVER RACE OR COLOUR,

IN WHICH EXTENDED SYMPATHY SHE RESEMBLES

HER DISTINGUISHED SCOTTISH ANCESTOR, CHIEF-JUSTICE LOGAN,

THE FOUNDER OF THE LOGANIAN LIBRARY AT PHILADELPHIA,

AND

THE FRIEND, AND IN HIS EARLY YEARS, THE SECRETARY

OF WILLIAM PENN.

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SOCIETY IN A GARRISON TOWN.

CHAPTER I.

SOME ACCOUNT OF NORHAM AND THE BOUVERIES.

ON the morning of Friday, the 4th of December, 1857, the postman, going on his official rounds in the neighbourhood of Norham, hurried up the avenue to Evergreen Villa, the residence of Captain Bouverie, where he had to deliver two letters. The town of Norham was chiefly remarkable for its antiquity, its narrow streets, and its

large garrison. Cavalry, infantry, and artillery occupied the grim and massive barracks which formed a principal feature of the place; while the General commanding the district being also stationed there with his staff, added to the importance of this military *locale*. Close by the back wall of the barracks ran a broad river, rippling brightly in the sun on warm summer days, or rushing along with sullen plash under the dark skies of winter. Its waters were spanned by a handsome bridge, which formed a pleasant promenade for the townspeople on summer evenings, when the military bands played. An old castle with a tall tower frowned from a height over the town and river, and formed a pretty substantial fortification, in addition to various batteries and outworks, heavily mounted with cannon, round other parts of the town. Except in its military capacity, Norham was not a particularly important place. A few coal and timber vessels and fishing-smacks were to be seen in the har-

bour; but the trade was not very brisk there, and the shopkeepers chiefly depended for sales and profits on the custom of the military. It was a quaint old town, with many curious traces of ancient architecture to be seen in its buildings. The surrounding country was rather bleak, with bare moorlands stretching northwards, and there were few gentlemen's seats in the vicinity. Beyond its antiquity, indeed, there was not much to interest strangers in Norham; and as, generally speaking, the officers stationed there cared little for relics of the past, they seldom failed to pronounce it an extremely dull quarter. At certain seasons of the year, such as were sportsmen found occasional amusement in hunting or shooting; but there was little society in the neighbourhood, and, compared to the number of the sterner sex, but a scanty supply of ladies.

Norham was not like some other country towns, where the belles can be counted by

the dozen and the beaux by twos and threes. There were no festive gatherings there, where the ladies outnumbered the gentlemen, or where the men took airs on themselves, and would only be agreeable as fancy suited them. It was the poor young officers, who had no money besides their pay, and the elderly, ill-favoured bachelor majors and colonels, who were growing bald or stout, who found themselves *de trop* at a ball in the neighbourhood. More than one unfortunate wight, who had been the pride and support of social gatherings in other regions, found himself, upon his arrival at Norham, dwindling down to the most lamentable insignificance, with scarce enough heart or hope left to permit him to place his cap on one side, or tighten his waist, as of yore. The very servant maids hardly deigned to look out of windows when the jaunty troopers clattered through the narrow streets on sparkling chargers; and the blast of bugles, rending the air at morning, noon, and night, was only

regarded like the humming of insects, or any other customary sound, scarcely noticeable.

When Captain Frederick Bouverie, with his wife and family, came to settle at Norham, his children were very young, and his only son just beginning his career at Eton. The younger son of a man who had considerable landed property, Captain Bouverie was well connected, but not wealthy for his rank of life, and, accustomed as he had always been to associate with men who were much better off in a worldly point of view than himself, he naturally thought his means very limited.

When only a lieutenant in his regiment, he happened to be quartered at Norham, where he fell in love with the lady who afterwards became Mrs. Bouverie, and who had a very limited fortune, like the generality of pretty women who captivate extremely young men of small incomes. Had she possessed a larger fortune, it is probable she would not have married Frederick Bouverie; but a stern grandmother, who thought herself pru-

dent, and a violent-tempered aunt, who had undertaken to guide her in the path of life, as she had lost her parents in childhood, considered that the sooner she was provided for the better ; and thus, when Mr. Bouverie proposed for her, they favoured his suit, and persuaded their young relative to accept him, and become what they called "settled."

There is one great advantage in being settled for better or for worse, and that is, that, generally speaking, it puts an end to many vain dreamings and vague hopes. If Mary Tredcroft had been indulging in romantic speculations as to future wealth, they were all put an end to by her marriage with the young officer, who had scarcely any income besides his military pay, although encumbered with very extravagant notions as to general expenditure. The world was, happily, at peace in those days, and there was no likelihood of a war that would cut off senior officers, and send surviving juniors to high places in the army list. Promotion was

slow, and the sons of Mars grew discontented, and grumbled because there was no chance of excitement.

After knocking about in military fashion for some years, from one quarter to another—sometimes in England, sometimes in Scotland; now in Malta, and again in England—Frederick Bouverie, having attained the rank of captain, was at length exasperated to sell out of the army; and he had just completed the sale of his commission when Mrs. Tredcroft, his wife's aunt, died, leaving her niece a funded property of some thousands, and a residence within a mile of Norham. This bequest arrived very opportunely, as otherwise the Bouveries, who had now three children—two daughters and a son—might have found themselves in very straitened circumstances. It was natural that they should decide upon settling at Norham, where a house and furniture were ready prepared for them, and where a few connections and relatives of Mrs. Bouverie still remained. Her

grandmother had died soon after her marriage; but there were cousins of different degrees of affinity sprinkled pretty thickly in the neighbourhood, and people considered that this fact would render a residence at Norham particularly agreeable to her. The house bequeathed to the Bouveries was named "Evergreen Villa"—generally called merely "Evergreen," in familiar conversation. It stood in a small pleasure ground, tastefully planted; and the interior was furnished comfortably, though in an old-fashioned manner. As soon as Captain Bouverie heard of the will, which put him and his wife in possession of an increase of their income, his chief thought was that he would send his son Dawson to Eton. Having nothing else to think of, he now fixed his hopes on this boy, who, so far, was remarkable for no particular brilliancy of character. Rather selfish, rather idle, accustomed to think a good deal of himself, Master Dawson was already conceited, and averse to doing anything that did not amuse or gratify

him. When his father first proposed sending him to Eton, Mrs. Bouverie made a feeble resistance to the plan, considering that it would take more money to keep him at that select place of education than was quite consistent with their income; but her husband, being of a contradictory nature, and having his mind fixed steadily upon giving every advantage to his precious son, only grew more determined to send him to Eton—and to Eton therefore he was dispatched previous to the rest of the family going to Norham.

“My dear, you do not consider what Dawson may be to us all yet,” said the father, when the boy was finally gone. “Recollect that he is our only son, and it would be strange, indeed, if we behaved in a niggardly manner about his education.”

“But I thought there might have been some cheaper school that would do as well,” said the mother, in a hesitating manner. “However, it is all done now, and I hope it is for the best.”

“Not a doubt of it,” declared the Captain, holding himself up very straight, and looking as if he knew quite well how matters would turn out in the future. “Dawson is not a boy that will disappoint us.”

Mrs. Bouverie hoped not, she said. What she really thought it is hard to say—for be it known that this poor woman had rarely ventured to express her real opinion upon any subject since she could first speak the English language. A stern grandmother and a violent tempered aunt had early taught her that she was not expected to have decided views upon any point, and she soon learned to keep her thoughts to herself. Indeed, it might have been almost questioned whether this system of teaching had not almost the effect of crushing all thoughts entirely. Her husband not being blessed with the sweetest of tempers, her marriage did not improve matters in this respect. He could not bear contradiction, and he was roused often to a pitch of fury by the smallest opposition ; so that Mrs. Bouverie

found it prudent to express few opinions, and to let him do pretty much as he pleased. There were people intimately acquainted with her who considered her a very quiet, namby-pamby sort of woman—one who had milk-and-water opinions upon most things, and a very scanty supply of ideas altogether; but whether they were correct in their estimate of her character could not be known positively. Mrs. Bouverie's habit of keeping silence had the effect of preserving peace at home, when otherwise there might have been violent tempests raging in the domestic circle; it had the effect of preventing what might have been the result of even one ill-judged speech—a separation between husband and wife, and a home broken up for ever. It takes two angry people to make a quarrel—the bitter sentence that is unanswered—the scorn that is not returned will fall, comparatively powerless, to the ground; and though Mrs. Bouverie vouchsafed no soft answer to turn away her husband's wrath, which was generally most un-

reasonable, she was yet enabled to live under his roof by saying as little as possible, and rarely venturing to give an opinion. Was she really the meek woman of few ideas that she appeared? Were there no thoughts hidden far down in her breast that might one day start up and burst out in a surprising manner? Would she go down to her grave bearing the same character of a stolid immovable sort of being, difficult to interest or rouse; rather stupid; perhaps a little dogged occasionally, and always walking in the same beaten track—a woman who would never be talked of for good or ill—a woman without enthusiasm or impulsiveness—a thoroughly respectable lady, who was never likely to forfeit the world's esteem or countenance, but who was not gifted with much of softness, or tender feeling, or sympathy for the distressed? Who could presume to say?

The education of Captain Bouverie's daughters was conducted by their mother, so that they, at least, did not cost their parents

much money ; for even the books they learned their lessons out of were cast-off books of their brother's. The elder girl, Ellinor, was inclined to be studious, and fond of retreating to quiet corners, where she could read undisturbed ; but her sister Dora was less steady, more impulsive, more thoughtless, and of a rather hasty temper. Mrs. Bouverie had not been particularly strict in bringing up her daughters. Any one who had been aware of the treatment she had received in her own childhood would have discovered that the system she adopted towards her children was exactly opposite to that pursued towards herself by her grandmother and aunt. Without petting them, she permitted her little girls to do a good deal as they chose. In the nursery they could talk as much as they pleased ; they could read what story books they liked, and arrange their toys precisely as appeared to them best. It was only when they began to quarrel and talk too loudly that their mother thought it proper to interpose her authority,

chiefly because she was afraid their father would hear the noise and grow angry. There was nothing Captain Bouverie disliked more than the sounds of children's cries, and of course he held his wife responsible for every stray scream from the nursery. No wonder, then, the little girls were a good deal indulged to keep them quiet; but the treatment of the mother was counter-balanced by that of the father, who rarely saw them enter the room where he was without looking at them with a stern determination to find out something wrong in their dress or manners; and sometimes, if in particularly ill-humour, he would strike terror into their hearts by commencing to ask them questions in geography or history, or by setting them intricate sums to make up on a slate. If they were unlucky enough to make mistakes in answering these questions, woe to both them and their teacher!

Well, perhaps, it was for their good that somebody should make them tremble occasionally, and let them know that life was not

all pleasantness and peace—a pathway without thorns. The little girls were of different dispositions, but both felt alike for their mother, when they heard their father sneering at the bad teaching they had received at her hands, and the elder one, in particular, tried to learn studiously, that papa might not say such things again before mamma.

Dawson's career at Eton was chiefly remarkable for all the money it cost. He learned there to become skilled in cricket and the art of expenditure. Never was there a greater little dandy than he appeared when he came home at vacation time to astonish his mother and sisters with newly-acquired airs and graces. His regular pocket money exceeded what was spent upon each of the girls for clothes—not to mention sundry private sovereigns slipped into his hand by his father when he was going back to Eton, and often in the middle of the holidays. It would have been decidedly shabby and reprehensible to stint the lad in money, or grudge

him what his companions all possessed, thought Captain Bouverie, and so far he was probably right; but then, what was the necessity of placing him among such companions?

The interest of the few thousands left by Mrs. Bouverie's aunt could not enable Captain Bouverie to do all he wished; and occasionally it was necessary to take up five hundred pounds or so of capital to meet expenses, till the capital began to diminish considerably. There was no disagreeable embarrassing clause in the aunt's will tying up the money or leaving it for Mrs. Bouverie's "sole and separate use," or to the children after her death. It had been simply bequeathed to Mrs. Bouverie, and therefore it was her husband's to do what he chose with. As time progressed she found him just as little inclined to pay her milliners' and dress-makers' accounts as in the days previous to getting this legacy—indeed there seemed to be a perpetual scarcity of money at Evergreen Villa, insomuch that the little girls

Ellinor and Dora soon began to wonder how it was that gold and silver coins were of so much importance. The younger one in particular, very early grew to think that there was something very magical in the name of money. Had she not but too frequently seen her mother's blank face when a servant had said, "Please, ma'am, So-and-so wants the payment of his bill," and had she not likewise observed her father's terrific frown, and heard his still more terrific words, when anyone asked him to settle an account? Indeed, so firmly did she connect pounds, shillings, and pence with vexation of spirit, that whenever she saw her father looking unusually severe or angry, she would steal softly from the room and inform her nurse that "papa was cross to-day about his money;" and upon one occasion she demanded of the said nurse how people ever got to have money enough, or grew rich after being once poor.

"Oh! different ways, Miss," said the

nurse; "some are born rich, and some get rich by working hard and saving up their earnings; but those are only the lower sorts of folk, not fit company for the grand people that never worked or earned anything."

"And if I wanted to grow rich and have money of my own, how could I get it?"

"By marrying a rich husband, Miss Dora. Some great fine officer will come to Norham when you are a grown-up lady, and you'll be so beautiful, he'll come to your papa and say he must have you for his wife, and your papa will agree; and so you'll be as rich as a fairy queen, quite easy like."

"But, suppose I am not beautiful?"

"There is no use in supposing that, for you're beautiful already."

"Ah! but Mrs. Sharpoint said the other day that she hoped I was good, though I *was* so ugly."

"She only wanted to keep you from being vain or growing conceited. Can't you look

in the glass and see what rosy cheeks and pretty little features you have, and all that lovely hair, like gold."

"And if I marry a rich officer, shall I have silk frocks, like the General's daughters?"

"Oh! ay; and grander than them, for you know they are ugly young ladies, and they won't get rich husbands."

"Then I should be finer than them, and I should make papa richer than the General."

"To be sure you would."

"Was mamma pretty, Jane?"

"Oh! dear, yes; the prettiest lady ever was seen."

"And why did not she marry some great, rich officer?"

"Because she liked your papa best; and he was rich enough, too, for the matter of that."

"But he has no carriage and horses, and he isn't as fine as the General?"

"Well, if he hasn't horses, he's better than those that have them, and he is just as grand as the General."

At this point of the conversation our ambitious little friend began to think her nurse was departing considerably from the truth in her efforts to please, and, looking solemnly into her face, she said,

“Jane, I am afraid you are wicked, and telling me what is false. Papa is not as fine as the General, and you know it.”

And, perhaps, there came simultaneous doubts as to her own extreme loveliness and the likelihood of any rich officer coming to marry her in future years. Yet her nurse's words were not without effect. Long before any one knew she had any idea beyond her broken nosed doll and her tin cups and saucers, she was dreaming of days to come, when she would be able to despise the silk dresses of the General's daughters—nay, the very carriage in which the General and his family so often drove by. Unhappily, little children can be often very envious and very spiteful. People are prone to think that envy and spite only come with wrinkles, grey hairs, and

other deformities of advancing age ; but an attentive observer of the human race will soon discover that they exist in a strong degree among the tiny occupants of nurseries, among rosy-cheeked boys and girls learning their lessons of life at school, and among young men and women in the bloom of youth. It would, of course, be pleasanter to think otherwise ; but as long as we see little Johnny of five and a half stamping with fury because Tommy of four has got the largest piece of bread and jam, or the newest hat, or hear shrieks of agony rending the air because Lucy of six has got red shoes, and her sister of five has only black ones, we must admit the miserable truth. Praise one young man to another with whom he is acquainted, and note if he will relish such praise. Speak of the great talent and beauty of one young girl to another who resides in the same town or county, and observe if no shadow will cross her face as she hears you.

Dear reader, I am afraid people do not wait

to become old bachelors or old maids to grow jealous and malignant. When you see a particularly spiteful elderly man or woman, you will make a pretty correct surmise if you consider he or she was, without doubt, spiteful all through childhood and youth. If a young lady begins to think of her own advantage at eight or nine, she will probably be a good deal more shrewd at eighteen or twenty. Think what a long time ten or twelve years is, and do not be surprised if the charming girl who at seven years old used to tyrannise over her younger sisters in the nursery—taking the largest apples and pears for herself—will be a little anxious to help herself to the good things of this life when she reaches the age of seventeen.

With all her early dreaming, Dora Bouverie was by no means a strange or eccentric little girl. Fair, smiling, and bright-eyed, she played with toys just like other children, planted flower roots in her little garden, and then soon picked them up again to see how

they were progressing as to growth ; trundled hoops, loved her mother, sister, and nurse, and was both fond and afraid of her father. Ellinor was a much quieter girl, with many dreams also, but of a different kind from those of her sister. Hers was a most unselfish nature and when she thought, it was nearly always about others—seldom of herself. No tyrant of the nursery had she ever been, nor had she ever taken unfair advantage of her sister's inferior size or strength to secure the best things for herself. She was one of those people who, without doing anything very reprehensible themselves, are yet made to suffer so often and so bitterly through the follies and faults of others.

Dawson Bouverie's education was at length supposed to be completed—the number of his years, rather than the extent of his information leading his father and himself to that conclusion—and he entered the army as ensign in an infantry regiment. He passed his examination, before receiving his commis-

sion, creditably enough. A friend of his father's happening to be among those appointed to put him and a few other trembling youths through the terrible ordeal of examination, the questions asked him were, fortunately, not very puzzling, and Captain Bouverie had tears in his eyes when he beheld his son's name in the "Military Gazette." As for the youth himself, he was disappointed that he could not have gone into the Dragoons, and that the allowance from his father was so small an addition to his Ensign's pay. Mrs. Bouverie never knew precisely how much her husband gave Dawson to assist his military income, but the amount was such that the family circumstances were nearly as much straitened as before the young gentleman had got a profession. Although she never made open murmurings against the extravagant sums lavished upon Dawson, Captain Bouverie had an instinctive feeling that his wife was very much averse to such lavish expenditure, and.

the time arrived when he felt ashamed to confess the extent of the money he was obliged to give his son.

Meanwhile the sisters grew up as well as the brother, and at length their father became rather proud of them. People whose judgment he valued, complimented him on the beauty of his daughters, and he felt gratified; but he was determined never to debase himself by such a mean pursuit as husband hunting on their behalf. Rather might they marry the poorest men in Norham, or be reduced to beggary in a single state, than that he should ever be accused, by grinning men round mess tables, of trying to get his daughters provided for. Had he not sat at mess tables and grinned in like manner himself many a time, at the thoughts of poor fathers striving to catch unwary men of fortune for their girls? Yes, he knew all about the inglorious business and the just odium it incurred; and he would never move an inch to further the interests of either Ellinor or

Dora in that respect. For this reason the door of Evergreen Villa was nearly always closed against members of the military profession, and, indeed, against the male sex generally. Captain Bouverie would encourage no flirtations in his house, and he made a point of only calling upon such officers as he had been acquainted with previous to their arrival at Norham—men who were usually of sober age, and not likely to be very attractive to young ladies of eighteen or twenty.

Now and then the girls went out to parties at the houses of other people; but there were no entertainments given at Evergreen, and even the invitations received were not always accepted, as whenever Captain Bouverie happened to be in ill-humour or low spirits, he always objected to his daughters enjoying themselves, and insisted on refusals being sent to all notes of invitation arriving at such periods.

Having thus presented to the reader a slight sketch of the Bouveries, I shall now proceed

with an account of what occurred upon the day on which this story opens, and which had a remarkable effect upon that family, and also upon some other people at Norham.

As I have already stated, the postman might have been seen hurrying at his usual rapid pace up the avenue to Evergreen Villa. The rain of the previous night was still glittering on the bright leaves of laurels and magnolias; the gravelled walk was soaked with wet; but for the last hour the sun had shone out cheerfully, and its wintry rays were lighting up the damp prospect. There was nothing particularly portentous in the aspect of the sky, or in the whisper of the wind that gently stirred the trees and bushes. It was a mild, still winter day—so still that you could hear the rush and roar of the swollen river at Norham as it hurried along, seething under the arches of the bridge, and tumbling in noisy rapids farther off.

CHAPTER II.

THE TWO LETTERS OPENED AND READ.

CAPTAIN BOUVERIE always liked to rise early in the morning, so that the breakfast hour at Evergreen was seldom later than nine in winter. Upon this particular day the family at the villa had assembled at the usual time in the breakfast room, and some of the party had already concluded the morning repast. The fire was beginning to fade even in the pale light of the wintry sun; a large grey cat was sitting on the once handsome, but now

rather shabby hearth-rug, shutting its eyes occasionally with an air of sleepy satisfaction. The heavy curtains that in bygone days had cost so much money, hung round the windows as thick and ponderous as of old, but less bright in colour than when they first came into possession of their present owners. In like manner, the Brussels carpet on the floor had become a wreck of its former brilliancy, and, though as soft to the foot as in days of yore, was less pleasant to the eye than when Mrs. Tredcroft purchased it from a worthy tradesman of Norham, whose son now reigned in his stead—buyer and seller of the carpet being alike gathered to their fathers.

Captain Bouverie had just finished his first egg, and taken possession of a second, when the postman's knock sounded at the outer door. It seemed a particularly loud, sharp rat-tat, and Mrs. Bouverie winced a little as it struck upon her ear. Some people can never hear the postman's knock without a nervous sinking of the heart. Happy are they who

have their letters and papers brought to them in peaceful country regions by the private and unofficial messenger despatched each morning to the neighbouring village, and who returns quietly with the letter-bag, startling nobody on his arrival.

“What can be coming to us to-day?” said Dora Bouverie, with a faint flush of expectancy on her fair cheek. She had risen from the table, and was now standing in one of the windows that looked into the garden, the sunlight falling on her golden hair, which was drawn off her face, and falling in short curls at the back of her head. In her simple morning costume she looked very beautiful, the delicate colour on her cheek being almost a match for the pale pink of the China rose she had fastened in the front of her dress. “I wish it may be something pleasant,” she added.

Captain Bouverie kept looking at the door in vague expectancy also, and a frown of impatience gathered on his brow as a delay

of some moments ensued before his curiosity was gratified.

"How is it," he asked, turning to his wife, "that the letters are not brought in instantly on arriving? What does it mean? I insist upon this system being altered, and—"

"Miss Ellinor, two letters," whispered the voice of Patty, the maid of all work, at the door, interrupting the harangue of the gallant captain. "My hands are dirty Miss, or I'd go in with them myself."

Ellinor hastened to the door, and took the two letters from the servant, who held them daintily between her finger and thumb, looking as though she had just emerged from the dust-pit. It was only of late that the establishment at Evergreen had been reduced to one servant.

On first coming to Norham, the Bouveries rejoiced in five domestics, who gradually dwindled down to smaller numbers, till the kitchen was left to the sole charge of one solitary female, who might have found black beetles

and mice, with an occasional cricket chirping in the oven—rather dreary company in the long winter evenings, if there had not been a good deal of work to do, and if the master did not “put the life across her with a frown like a thunder-cloud,” if she did not send up spoons, and urn, and knives and forks, and boots all aglow with polishing; to say nothing of linen to be made up in the neatest manner, and unexpected orders to run to Norham and back in twenty minutes to execute some message, whether the rain was pouring heavily or the wind blowing a hurricane.

The occasional presence of Miss Ellinor in the kitchen was a relief also to the unhappy denizen of that lower region, for she was never afraid of receiving a harsh word from that young lady, who could only bring herself with an effort to find fault, even when fault-finding was necessary. So now, with a wild look of embarrassment, in consequence of her untidy appearance, Patty appealed to Miss

Ellinor in the matter of the letters, and was glad to escape to her work below without being obliged to "face into the parlour," as she expressed it.

"Disgusting!" ejaculated the Captain, as Ellinor gave him one of the letters without looking at the handwriting that directed it. The other epistle was on delicate note paper, and contained an invitation to a party that evening.

"An invitation from Miss Barnard, mamma," said Dora. "The General is to have a party this evening, and we are asked."

"Odd to give such short notice," observed Mrs. Bouverie, without betraying much interest in the matter.

"This note was written early yesterday, and should have come last night. However, Miss Barnard says they are only to have a few friends," continued Dora.

"Which generally means that the rooms will be crammed full," said Mrs. Bouverie.

"Oh, I think not. Sir Ralph never gives very large parties ; but it is provoking that the invitation did not come before, as I want my blue tarletan altered, and I would never be able to do it now."

"Perhaps I might do it in time," said Ellinor.

"I don't know. If you began it and I did not finish the work, it would be worse than ever, as I could not wear it at all."

"I think I could have it done in time."

"But there is ribbon wanting, and lace for the trimming, and I hate going out to shop on the day of a party; one gets so fatigued and dull all the evening after. That stupid Patty might go for the ribbon, only she would be sure to bring green if I said blue."

"Can't Ellinor go?" asked Mrs. Bouverie, quietly.

"Oh, how could she go and alter my gown too."

"I think I could manage both undertakings," said Miss Bouverie.

"Then, if you go out, you might bring me a little of that pretty lace I saw in Miss Grumberry's window—or, perhaps it was at Benson's—I really am not sure; but it was somewhere in Church Street—a very pretty pattern, which they said the empress of the French had some just like on her last ball dress; and then, if you go as far as that, you could call in at Hodson's about artificial flowers and white shoes."

"You surely do not want new white shoes yet?" said Mrs. Bouverie.

"Oh, the last I got are quite shabby, and look like boats. I could not wear them any more. Ellinor, do you think the new aide-de-camp came yesterday? Major Tattler said he was to come, when we were speaking to him on the bridge on Tuesday."

"I suppose he did."

"I wonder what he is like. I must look out for him in the Peerage."

"Why the Peerage? Would not the Army List do?" asked Mrs. Bouverie, who rarely

looked anywhere but straight before her, and seldom raised her eyes in speaking.

“He is a nephew of Lord Killeevan’s mamma,—that is the reason we must find out about his family in the Peerage.”

“Not the heir to the title, you may be sure,” said the mother.

“But we can see how far from it he is. Ellinor, hand out the Peerage.”

The Peerage in question happened to be sixteen years old, and not altogether satisfactory. Dora handled it dexterously, and soon turned to the required place.

“Here he is—I mean his uncle, or grandfather—‘Rodney St George, Viscount Killeevan, county of Donegal—in the Peerage of Ireland—born 1776, succeeded on the death of his father, 1805—married 20th April, 1800, Hon. Charlotte de Poyntz, third daughter of Charles, ninth Earl of BaldbEEK, &c., &c., &c.’ Oh, I suppose the new aide-de-camp is one of the grandsons of this old gentleman,” said Dora; “but how provoking that we

cannot know which; I am afraid, however, he has no chance of the title at all events.

We should positively get a new Peerage."

"Take care of the leaves dropping out of the book, Dora," observed Mrs Bouverie, warningly, as her daughter still held the volume, which had already undergone a good deal of wear and tear, and was now considerably dilapidated.

"I should like to have my name here," said Dora, tapping the book with her delicate forefinger. "I wish I was Lady Something or other, or even an Honourable."

"Put up the sugar, Ellinor," observed Mrs. Bouverie, looking straight before her; "and see that the fire is not going out."

"Ellinor, put down a list of the things I want, so that you may remember them when you are going out," said Dora. And Ellinor immediately took out her pencil and pocket-book, and wrote the required list, without asking her sister to repeat the items before-mentioned.

So far no one had noticed Captain Bouverie's aspect as he perused the letter that the post had brought for him that morning. With his back turned to the breakfast table, so that his face was not seen as he bent over the fireplace, he had opened the envelope and read its contents, growing paler and paler as he went through them.

A dreadful threat was shadowed forth in that letter—a threat that made the blood of the reader freeze ; and yet no coward was he. Frederick Bouverie would not have shrunk from the deadliest strife of battle that soldier was ever summoned to ; he would have braved any danger almost ; yet his heart sank, and his head became giddy, till a feeling of actual faintness oppressed him as he put that letter back into its envelope with fingers that trembled. No more breakfast was needed for him that morning.

CHAPTER III.

MR. AND MRS. BARR.

ON that same day, at a rather late hour, Abraham Barr, upholsterer and cabinet maker, stood at the door of his house in Church Street, Norham. He was a man of about forty-seven, decidedly plain in appearance, with something sinister in his cast of countenance; his figure was slight and of the middle height, the neck being rather long and the shoulders somewhat narrow, though the man was muscular and very strong; his face

was remarkable from the fact that one eye was darker in colour than the other ; the nose was long and curiously shaped, the chin short and slightly prominent; his hair was thick, dark, and curling, with scarcely a white streak running through it. He was clothed respectably for his class of life—shabby enough for a tradesman who did nearly all his own work, and sufficiently well dressed for a man who was comparatively independent. Abraham Barr had always been regarded as an honest individual, and was well spoken of by all who had dealings with him, except, perhaps, the officers at Norham, to whom he hired out easy chairs, screens, carpets, &c., with which to deck their dingy barrack-rooms, and who did not scruple to call him sundry unflattering names when his bills for the hiring of the said furniture became due ; but, as such epithets are not unfrequently applied by gentlemen without discrimination to tradesmen who dare to demand payment lawfully due, it cannot be inferred from this that the upholsterer was

either an extortioner or one who over-reached his customers. His father had been a Methodist, and Abraham was rather given to singing hymns in his workshop while varnishing up old sofas and chairs, or executing designs in mosaic. In other respects he did not seem particularly pious. He was of a sarcastic turn of mind, and did not think well of the world in general. Of the inhabitants of Norham his opinion was remarkably low. There was not a confectioner, grocer, saddler, baker, butcher, or haberdasher in the town that he considered worthy of confidence; and there were individuals in higher spheres of life whom he regarded as scarcely less objectionable. Yet this man of suspicious and distrustful nature was a most excellent domestic character—one who, so far, had proved himself a good husband and father; and, perhaps, one of the few persons whom he looked upon as perfectly worthy of trust in the world was his wife—though, according to his own account, he had not married for love, but rather

out of pique, to show his indifference to a young woman who had jilted him. Mrs. Barr was not a pretty woman, nor had she ever been even passably good-looking; neither was she a person of very demonstrative affection or tenderness; but she was a woman of extremely strict principle. What she considered right that she did, and nothing would persuade her to act contrary to whatever moral code she supposed correct. Brought up by a Quaker mother—though not a Quaker herself—she was imbued by some of the ideas that particularly distinguish the Society of Friends; but, though she differed considerably from her husband in opinion on various subjects, they were still much attached to each other, never having so far disagreed materially upon any matter of serious importance. Like most wives in her rank of life, Mrs. Barr was the treasurer of the family finances, and such money as was not deposited in the bank was always handed over by Abraham to her as soon as it came into his possession, as he well

knew that it was safer with her than with himself. So the upholsterer stood this day at the door of his house—not a shop, reader, but a private house, of which the upper rooms were let in lodgings—and, looking up and down the street, he beheld a man, bearing the aspect of an officer's servant, coming towards him.

“Good morning, Smith,” said he, as the man stopped near him; “does your master want anything else, to-day? I’ve just got an uncommon nice easy chair, covered in the same sort of damask that he got for the window curtains.”

“I’ll look at it,” replied Smith; “but at present it’s the picture-frame he wants, that he sent here a month ago.”

“Ay, so he did. That was a great mistake of mine; I forgot it altogether.”

“Just the same way always, Barr,” observed Mrs. Barr, who was passing by, wishing her husband would not waste his time

standing at the open door and letting in the chilly winter air.

"Come to the workshop, and look at the chair anyway," said Abraham, leading the way through the somewhat narrow hall to the yard at the back of the house, where stood the upholsterer's workshop.

"You shouldn't have that way of leaving one bit of work to go to another," said Mrs. Barr, who happened to be going also to the workshop; "it disappoints customers."

"Oh, no matter," said the obliging Smith, "I'll not mention anything about it to the captain, and he'll be likely to forget it for another while; he isn't over-particular that way. How cold the day is, Mr. Barr; I thought the wind would cut through me when I was coming over the bridge."

"Has the General's edge-a-cong come yet?" asked Barr, trying to turn the conversation.

“Yes, came yesterday.”

“Did he so? Richard, get your cap, and take one of those cards of mine up to the edge-a-cong’s quarters, and leave it for Mr. St. George ; that’s his name. Do you hear? and stop that nonsense.”

This mandate was addressed to a youth of fifteen or so, who was in the vicinity, occupied in teaching a dog to stand on his hind legs. Richard continued to instruct the dog.

“Will you get your cap, I say, and take my card up to the new edge-a-cong’s quarters?” repeated the father, sternly.

“Richard!” said the mother, warningly. But it was not till Abraham had made a convulsive rush towards the immovable youth that he chose to abandon his pursuit, and go in search of one of the cards alluded to.

Abraham Barr’s cards set forth the information that he was able to supply every description of military furniture, for sale or hire, on the lowest possible terms ; that he now returned his warmest thanks for the past

custom of officers at Norham, and solicited a continuance of such unbounded patronage, &c., &c. Whenever a fresh regiment or battery of artillery arrived at Norham, it was the upholsterer's first care to distribute a number of his cards at the barracks, and thus apprise the newly-arrived officers of his calling and capabilities. Even the fact of a single aide-de-camp coming to the town was not to be overlooked. A card must surely be sent to him ; for, being merely human, it was to be expected he would require a sofa, or carpet, or some such article of adornment or comfort for his quarters.

"Mr. St. George is Irish," said the servant, as Richard started off on his mission.

"So much the better," remarked Barr ; "I like the Irish officers ; they are never niggardly or penurious in their orders."

"But do they pay well?" asked Smith, looking knowing, and, perhaps, sceptical.

"Well, as to the payment, English and Irish are pretty much alike," said the cabinet

maker, putting his head on one side, reflectingly. "There's none of them to say over glad to get their bills. You see it ain't the fashion to like to pay off-hand. However, it all comes generally right in the end, somehow or other."

Smith ventured another observation on the severity of the weather.

"It's nearly as cold as when we were in Canada in '48. The men's feet used to be frost-bitten, and our only remedy was brandy and rum."

"That will be a remarkably handsome chair," said the upholsterer, viewing the easy chair which stood before him with admiring eyes, as if suddenly struck with its beauty.

"Oh! pretty fair," said Smith, carelessly. "For my part, I never thought a great deal about that coloured damask; it ain't what you may call brilliant enough."

"I think it remarkably brilliant," said Mrs. Barr, positively; "it's what may be called dashing."

"Not to my taste," said Smith, shortly.

"That's where we differ, Smith," replied the upholsterer, as the slightest shade passed over his face.

"There's no two tastes alike," said Mrs. Barr, philosophically.

"That's nonsense," argued Smith; "for you see how when a thing's really pretty, everybody agrees to call it pretty; and when a thing's ugly, they call it ugly."

There was a pause, during which Abraham twirled round the chair in dispute, and pretended to be occupied in examining one of its castors.

"Well, I suppose I may tell the Captain that you won't have the picture-frame ready for another fortnight or so?" said Smith, after a silence of some minutes. "As to the chair, I don't believe I need mention it; for I don't think he'd like it at all."

"For why?" asked Barr.

"The colour is against it in the first place, and it don't appear to slope back enough.

My master likes a good, easy, lounging chair."

"There never was a more comfortable lounging chair than that," persisted Barr, putting his hand on the back of the chair, and moving it backwards and forwards slowly, with a firm grip of his strong hand, while a rather brighter light than usual sparkled in his eyes, of different colour. "A fine, steady, sensible, easy chair for any officer, let him be captain or general, I don't care which."

"I might, perhaps, tell the master you've got such a thing," said Smith, condescendingly. "The frost is really cutting to-day. There is nothing like a glass of good, strong rum on a day like this."

Barr went on examining portions of the chair attentively.

"I suppose I had best go," said Smith, rising from the wooden box, on which he had seated himself. "And I can tell you you had better begin that frame without delay, as the Captain was in a fury concerning it this very

morning, swearing about such carelessness and neglect; but unless you have another arm-chair more suitable than that, I needn't speak of it, I know. It's more likely he'll look in at Wright's ware rooms, down town. They get the newest fashions from London, very often."

Saying this, Smith lingered for a few seconds in the yard, and finding Abraham still disposed to keep silence, he walked towards the door.

"Good morning," Mr. Barr.

"Good morning," replied the upholsterer, and then Smith stepped through the yard-door. He had nearly vanished when Abraham thought better of it. His bad temper had been getting the upper-hand of him; but he reflected upon his own interests, the welfare of his family, the prosperity of his trade, and with an effort tried to gulp down rising anger.

"Stay a minute, Smith," he cried out, as if seized with quite a new idea; "perhaps, as

the day is so cold, you'll take a glass of something warm?"

"Eh? Oh! no, thank you."

"Yes, I say, it's the very thing for the damp. Agnes, bring out some of that rum we got last, in the large bottle, for Smith."

Mrs. Barr coughed, and went reluctantly to do as requested. Smith said, "Not at all," but came back from the door towards the workshop, and again seated himself on the wooden box, in a state of apparent indifference. Mrs. Barr did not condescend to bring the required rum herself, but deputed her small servant-maid to do so—the said damsel being an extremely sulky-looking child of fourteen, who seemed always impelled by an inscrutable power to do wrong, and then to regard herself as very ill-used when corrected for her errors.

"See what you are about, Alice, and don't hold that bottle crooked," urged Mr. Barr, as the handmaid approached with bottle and



glasses in a hazardous position. "I'll bet any money you haven't the corkscrew."

The girl did not vouchsafe to make any reply, but Smith pulled out a small corkscrew from his pocket, remarking that it was never amiss to be provided with a useful article in case of emergency.

"That's a nice little table, Mr. Barr," he observed, as preparations were going forward for the approaching potation.

"Ay, the mosaic one; that's for sale. I never hire out those real valuable articles."

"Isn't that a comfortable-looking couch over there, covered in red?" asked Smith, who began to view surrounding things in a more favourable light.

"Not near so much so as the easy chair we were speaking of; and then, as I remarked before, the damask of the chair would match your master's curtains. They are of all the same piece."

"So they are, and that's a good considera-

tion, too; thank you, not quite so much. Very fine rum, certainly!"

"That chair ought to be worth six guineas, if I was selling it."

"I don't doubt it. Hiring furniture is different from buying it. You're not so bound to it; and, maybe, it might suit the Captain, after all. It can do no harm to tell him of it, and you may depend I'll say everything in its favour. He always minds what I say. There's not such another officer in the 11th as my master. Just the smallest drop, please—there. I'll probably come down about the chair in the course of the day."

"Perhaps your master would like to see the chair himself before deciding on it?"

"I think not. He leaves everything of that sort to me," said Smith.

"And the more fool he," thought Barr.

"There's to be a dinner party and a ball this evening at the General's," observed Smith, who, having taken as much rum as he considered consistent with his views of good

manners and a steady walk home, now began to enter into a little refreshing gossip.

"So I heard," replied Barr, who generally knew everything that was going on in the military line at Norham. "And Lord Halesby and his son are to be there—that is, at the dinner party."

"And of course the Miss Bouveries will go to the ball?" said Mrs. Barr.

"I don't know, indeed," said Smith.

"There will be nobody there to compare to them, anyway," added Mrs. Barr, in her positive way. "I'd defy anyone to get a prettier lady in the county than Miss Ellinor. I've just seen her passing now, picking her steps so quietly through the muddy streets. It's a pity she often looks so grave and sad-like. I often wonder she ain't lighter-hearted, and she so young."

"She ain't nothing to her sister," said Barr. "Miss Dora is the belle of these parts."

"She may be the most dashing-looking, but she isn't, to my taste, as handsome as Miss

Ellinor. There's a look in Miss Ellinor's eyes that you wouldn't get out of your mind for a week, it's so beautiful and saintlike," said Mrs. Barr; "and I know somebody that thinks the same, if he'd only speak out and tell it, but he won't, and if he did I'm afraid it wouldn't be any use."

"Who's that?" asked Smith, instantly filled with curiosity. "Is it any of our officers?"

"Oh! I'm not going to say who it is; but it ain't any military gentleman at Norham—that's one thing; so you may make your mind easy."

And Mrs. Barr laughed a merry little laugh, and her small brown eyes twinkled at the thoughts of the mysterious personage, who was, in fact, at that moment upstairs in her drawing-room, looking out upon the muddy street through which Miss Bouverie had just passed, and wondering, perhaps, where she was going on such a damp day, with pools of water lying among the mud in the middle of the street.

Ellinor had very little idea that any one was watching her as she passed 'on her way, filled with some very anxious thoughts in her own mind—thoughts that took away all consciousness of self for the present.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. TRYDELL.

THE lodger who occupied the upholsterer's principal rooms was Mr. Trydell, the assistant chaplain to the forces at Norham, a hard-working man of three-and-thirty, who had a very small salary, and but little spare time to call his own—a man of slender form and thoughtful cast of face, not handsome, not remarkable-looking in any way, with dark eyes, rather deep set, and often looking as though he did not get as much sleep as nature

required ; dark hair, growing thin on the temples, with a white streak here and there glistening among it, scarcely perceptible as yet to the casual observer, but well known to the owner, who felt already that youth, and hope, and energy were beginning to fade and wax faint, and might possibly soon die out altogether.

Ten years ago he had probably considered that his learning and his preaching might have brought him into special notice long before this, and that it was an easy matter to become an archdeacon, a dean, or perhaps even a bishop. During his first cure at three-and-twenty, he had rushed enthusiastically to his work, had done five times as much as human health or strength could stand, and at the end of two years had retired to take rest and save his life. Sometimes doing duty in country parishes far from the hum and tumult of cities—sometimes in country towns—without gaining much but experience of life and a good deal of sobering down, future

years found him beginning to take less buoyant views of things in general. So far from thinking that he should ever become an arch-deacon or a dean, he had given up ideas of being even a rector; and we find him now at Norham, doing his duty faithfully, and to the best of his ability, in that sphere of life to which Providence had called him—looking only to his own conscience for reward of things done that might have been left undone, for aught that earthly authorities could have known of the matter.

It is strange how insignificant and fleeting the vanities of the world seem to the disappointed, sobered man or woman, and how absurd and childish ambition concerning worldly distinction appears to them after a time—not altogether on the principle of the fox and grapes story, but because, when the passions are deadened, and the spirit subdued, thought and reason often increase in power.

Robert Trydell had at length learned to

form a pretty correct estimate of his own capabilities, mental and physical. He knew that his sermons were somewhat dull, because he saw that many of his hearers fell asleep while he preached; and so far from expecting to attain distinction by his pulpit oratory, he would have been thankful if one person among his congregation went away edified or impressed by his words—if one soul had been advanced nearer the end to which all sermons and all spiritual work on earth should alone tend. Sweet, indeed, are the uses of adversity if they teach us humility, for therein is wisdom.

Mr. Trydell was comfortable enough in his lodgings at the upholsterer's—for Mrs. Barr attended to his wants herself—and it was only upon rare occasions that the dull handmaid Alice was permitted opportunities of breaking the glass or crockery devoted to his use.

A careful, thrifty woman was Mrs. Barr; gentle and swift of hand, as she could be

smart of tongue when occasion required, it was cheery to see her pile up the winter fire, and lay the snowy cloth for breakfast, with cups, spoons, and plates all shining with the polishing of her own hands. None knew better how to make the chaplain's tea and toast than she ; indeed, it might almost have been imagined that the tea, sugar, and bread rather increased than diminished daily under her management, so long did each last. No morsel of the lodger's eatables ever found its way to the table of the landlady, who was as particular in making good bargains when purchasing articles for his consumption as if any extra money saved could benefit herself. In any rank of life there could not have been a more honest person than Mrs. Barr ; yet she was not without her failings, and often when Mr. Trydell was occupied in writing his sermon after tea, in the quiet of the evening, she would burst into his sitting room to ask his opinion with reference to the punishment due to one or other of her boys, for, perhaps, wil-

fully breaking a pane of glass, or refusing to wear a jacket, framed by her own hands, out of a cast-off coat of the upholsterer. She was likewise inquisitive upon matters of theology and morality, and occasionally puzzled the chaplain with startling questions.

Perhaps the most interesting individual in the family of the cabinet maker was the eldest daughter, Lucy, a pretty girl of seventeen, fresh as a rose, with bright eyes and dimpled cheeks; a trim-figured damsel, always neatly dressed, and as coquettish in her attire as her mother would permit, for Mrs. Barr was severe in her views respecting the behaviour of young women, and rather considered such things as flowers in bonnets, flounces on gowns, or curls of hair as tending to the destruction of the female character. No doubt she would have extinguished the roses on her daughter's cheeks, and the bright light in her eyes, had she been able to do so. As it was, she was obliged to be satisfied with ordering the glossy brown hair to be kept tightly out

of the way as much as possible, and insisting upon sober-coloured garments to clothe the pretty figure; but Lucy knew how to make her own dresses, so that no beauty of waist or shoulders could be concealed; and, in her brown cashmere gown, white apron, and snowy white collar, she looked quite as charming as if in more brilliant costume. Besides making all her own clothes, and those of her mother and sisters, Lucy, though not exactly a professional dressmaker, now and then earned a few shillings by her needle, and she assisted her father in various ways at the upholstering business. Although very much inclined to make imaginary matrimonial matches for any single people in whom she was interested, Mrs. Barr had not, as yet, thought of courtship or marriage for her daughter; indeed, both father and mother seemed to look upon Lucy still as a child; but whether the young lady herself entertained the same ideas was by no means certain.

A certain corporal of Lancers lately arrived at Norham, might have been seen walking up Church Street very often—a young man of respectable appearance and good conduct, as the stripes on his arm could testify, but nothing but a corporal of Lancers for all that, and therefore by no means of high enough rank for Miss Barr; so it was not likely he should gain much, as far as she was concerned, by frequenting the neighbourhood of the upholsterer's house.

Both Abraham Barr and his wife were proud, and determined to rise in the world. Already they had begun to put money in the bank, and probably Abraham was looking forward to a time when he might retire from business, and see his sons and daughters prosperously settled in life.

“I don't care for riches so much as respectability,” said Mrs. Barr, when expressing her views with regard to her children's future career. “All I want is for them to be honest, and esteemed as good men and

women ; but I would have a poor opinion of any of them that lowered themselves, or sunk down to a sphere inferior to their own. Let them go higher if they can, but never lower. Also, I'd wish it to be known, that if any of them became disgraced by act of their own, they would lose my favour and countenance for ever. Never more inside my door should son or daughter stand who brought the name of Barr to shame !”

And the determined expression of the woman's face, as she uttered the words, might have done honour to a Spartan mother of old.

“Hard words, Agnes,” said Abraham, after a pause ; “I'll bet ten pounds that you wouldn't keep to that resolution with one of your own children.”

“God grant the time may never come when the wager could be decided, Abraham,” said Mrs. Barr, solemnly ; “but as I stand here this day, I'd be as hard on one of my own flesh and blood as I would be on anyone else.”

"And I suppose you would make no difference in favour of me, either?" said Barr.

"None at all," declared his wife, looking full at him with unflinching eye. "If I wouldn't favour my own children, I wouldn't favour my own husband. You're old enough now, Abraham, to know right from wrong, and if you came to disgrace by any act of your own, you'd come to it wilfully; so, you see, you would lose my respect for ever by a dishonest or wicked act."

Now, Abraham Barr did not quite relish this conversation of his wife. Without knowing precisely wherefore, it jarred upon him, and he understood enough of her disposition to be aware that she never uttered such speeches at random. At a time not very far distant he had reason to know how unswervingly this woman of steadfast purpose could keep her resolution in this respect; but as yet no foreshadowing of coming troubles had appeared; no cloud, even the size of a man's

hand, had begun to steal over the horizon ;
and the upholsterer dreamed of no approaching gloom to darken his home and happiness.

CHAPTER V.

AGREEABLE RELATIONS.

ON through the muddy streets, trying to get over the business of shopping, entrusted to her by her sister, as speedily as possible, Ellinor Bouverie made as much haste as she could in buying all that she was commissioned to buy that day. It is generally considered that ladies like shopping, especially when purchasing articles of dress; but whether such a supposition be correct, or the reverse, it is certain the pastime afforded little pleasure or

amusement to Miss Bouverie on this particular day. To match a ribbon or piece of silk was no easy matter at Norham, where the shops, though numerous enough, were not stocked with an exceeding abundance of goods; so Ellinor had to go from one shop to another, and to undergo persuasions that colours by no means alike were an exact match—the only match that could possibly be got in any establishment in Europe—till her head was bewildered and her eyes weary. The principal thoughts occupying her mind all the time were some concerning her father and his haggard, ghastly face, as he stood up that morning and left the breakfast-room after reading the letter he had received by the post; not the wrathful fierce visage with which he often read disagreeable letters, but a careworn, subdued expression—a look almost helpless in its utter dejection and horror. The idea of his face was haunting her all the day; and the fact that he had not made any objection to Dora and her going that evening to the party at

General Barnard's only puzzled her more. Before he quitted the breakfast-room Ellinor had asked him if she should write an acceptance of the invitation, and he had said, "Just as you like," in a low, unsteady voice, and then hurried away, leaving his tea unfinished, his egg unbroken. Mrs. Bouverie regarded the circumstance of her husband having only taken half his usual quantity of breakfast with the greatest composure. Patiently could she bear his cutting sneers, his unreasonable fits of anger ; patiently could she bear his loss of appetite, or any other indication of illness and discomfort.

"Papa looks very pale," said Dora, looking a little uneasy, when her father left the room.

"I hope he is not ill," said Ellinor, who grew pale herself.

"Put up that egg," said Mrs. Bouverie, "and it will do to heat to-morrow. Perhaps Patty would warm that cup of tea for herself ; it is a pity to let it be wasted." So spoke the wife,

Ellinor wrote a note to Miss Barnard, saying she and her sister would accept her invitation for that evening ; and then with an uneasy feeling weighing on her, she got ready to go out. " I wonder why papa never confides in any of us," she thought, while going mechanically about her shopping. " How much happier it would be for us all if he would tell us what frets and worries him ; and we might help him too, and make his burthen lighter for himself to bear." When Dora's commissions were executed, Miss Bouverie proceeded to transact some housekeeping business for her mother, and then felt a good deal jaded. But there was yet another duty to perform. Two elderly relatives—widows with severe tongues—who lived about a mile from Norham had to be visited, and informed of the approaching party at the General's, otherwise the Bouveries would run a fearful risk of standing in their black books for the next six months. Terrible relatives were these, who considered themselves entitled to

all the privileges of relationship, yet who bestowed but little affection on their kinsfolk. So terrible was it to Ellinor to pay a visit to these amiable ladies when they were labouring under any imaginary slight or offence, that she now determined to go to them in order to avoid such a disagreeable ordeal at some future time. For herself and her sister to go to a party of which these relatives had never heard beforehand would be quite enough to offend them for weeks, and therefore it was necessary to walk even in all the mud and dirt of the wintry afternoon to gratify them on this point. It is wonderful how influential and important a bitter tongue can sometimes render a person. Woe to the misguided individual who happened to vex or offend the good Mrs. Dart or Mrs. Sharpont ! All the folly and harm that had been committed by the said individual himself, or any of his ancestors, was sure to be brought forward and talked of venomously to all their acquaintances, till somebody else annoyed

them, and so turned the current of their revenge. Having been long resident at Norham—in fact born and reared there—they knew all the gossip and scandal of the past and present; all the pedigrees of the county families; all about who were upstarts and made their money in a reprehensible manner; whose grandfather cheated another man's grandfather, not to mention sundry other surprising pieces of information, not always quite authentic. Mrs. Bouverie and her elder daughter stood in awe of these ladies, but neither Captain Bouverie nor the younger girl cared particularly for their favour or displeasure. They were not wealthy, and they gave no entertainments themselves. They had retired from the gaieties of this life, for the good reason that nobody invited them anywhere except perhaps by a printed circular to a religious meeting or bazaar in aid of some charity, and even these last attentions gratified them. To be remembered even for the purpose of getting a shilling or

a half-crown from them was soothing ; and they were flattered when a grocer, newly-arrived at Norham, or an apothecary lately set up in the town, sent them notices of their arrival.

Passing out of the town, Ellinor came upon a quiet country road which led her to the Copse, where Mrs. Dart and Mrs. Sharpoint lived—a pretty cottage, surrounded by shrubs and garden plots, all neatly kept, with nothing out of place or in disorder. Mrs. Dart was standing at the door when Miss Bouverie approached the house ; a pleasant looking, rather handsome woman, fair, tall, and stout, and of a good humoured cast of countenance when not under the direct influence of vexation, or spite, or envy. She kissed the young lady affectionately, and thanked her for coming to see her so warmly that Ellinor began to think herself a great hypocrite, and to feel abashed at her own duplicity.

“ What a bright, fine day, my dear, after

the dreadful rain last night," she said. " But you must have had a most unpleasant walk, and indeed, nobody could have looked for your coming out such weather without a carriage ; and why you haven't a carriage I can't understand, for I'm sure Mrs. Tredcroft left your mother enough to let you have every comfort. But I always said your mother was the worst manager I ever saw—an indolent sort of woman, you know—lets everything go at sixes and sevens, and looks after nothing except what she can't help."

Being accustomed to hear Mrs. Dart pronounce very unflattering opinions of her mother's character and capabilities, Ellinor did not grow as indignant and fire up as quickly and as fiercely as, perhaps, the young ladies in the generality of novels do, whenever anyone dares to disparage their parents in their hearing. In the first place, she knew Mrs. Dart would not mind a word she said in defence of her mother ; and in the next, she laid so little value upon that worthy

kinswoman's estimate of anything or anyone that she would not take the trouble of contradicting her ; she could only thereby rouse her anger, *et voila tout*. Perhaps Ellinor was a coward and very reprehensible, but she acted as she thought best, reader, and so said nothing when her mother was disparaged in her presence by a ponderous elderly relative three times her own age.

"How fortunate it was I took up the gladiolus roots before that heavy rain, yesterday," said Mrs. Dart. "Do you see that polyanthus narcissus ? Is it not very forward ? I always have them in flower before anyone else. I'll engage you haven't one up yet !"

"No, not one yet," replied Ellinor, who was glad to be able to say so with truth.

Mrs. Dart looked triumphantly pleased.

"And how is Miss Dora ? Too grand, I suppose, to walk so far, to see two old ladies. Ah ! she is a sad, conceited girl. Well, Nelly, though people do make such an out-

cry about her beauty, I don't think she is so much better looking than you after all. I always say I like your face best; and as for beauty, it is all a worthless attraction."

Miss Bouverie laughed good-humouredly. Perhaps she had a dim suspicion that she was quite as pretty as her sister in her own style.

"Well, have you any news for me? Has any good luck come yet to Evergreen—anything in the way of a proposal?"

"Nothing more than an invitation, which came this morning, to a party at Sir Ralph Barnard's to-night," said Ellinor.

"Dear me! and did they give such short notice? Just like as if they had asked other people who refused to go, making kind of stop-gaps of you."

"Oh, no! the invitation was delayed in some way; it was dated yesterday morning."

"Ah! that might have been a trick to let you think it was written then. Depend upon it, some other people sent apologies, and then they thought of you and Dora."

"Indeed, I do not think any such thing, Mrs. Dart. You know we are always invited to the General's, and that is the reason they are not so ceremonious as other people with us."

"Perhaps so. It looks odd, though, as if the Barnards thought you would jump at any invitation, no matter how short. But are you going?"

"Yes, I believe so."

"And is your mother?"

"I think not. You know papa generally escorts us to parties."

"It would be better for your mother to go. People think it odd for young girls to go about to balls and parties without a matron."

"Oh, papa does very well for a chaperon."

"I wonder he can take the trouble of escorting a couple of chits of girls everywhere."

"When he thinks it a trouble he does not go out."

"And when did you hear from my pet, Dawson?"

"Not very lately; he has not written for some time to us."

"Oh! I suppose too much occupied with his duties. I hope you write often to him."

"Yes, pretty often. Whenever he sends me a letter I write one in return very soon."

"You should send him two or three letters for every one of his."

"Perhaps he would not care about getting so many," replied Ellinor, unable to conceal a slight smile, as she remembered her brother telling her once that he hardly ever read either her or Dora's letters through—just skimmed them over, and then lit his cigars or pipe with them.

"Young men look for a good deal of attention from their sisters at home," observed Mrs. Dart, who was now leading the way into the house, having finished nailing up a rose-bush against a wall outside; "and if they don't get it, they soon grow careless about

them. When Dawson comes home you must be very affectionate, and, in fact, *obsequious* to him, or he will soon cease to find pleasure in the home circle. You recollect what that sensible woman, Mrs. Babbleton, wrote in her 'Advice to British Females?'

"No; I do not just now recal it."

"You should read that excellent work till you know it by heart. As to Dawson, you ought to consider him very precious; it is such an advantage to girls to have a brother. I often think if my poor dear brother Bob was alive it would make a great difference to my sister and me. Even when he was quite palsied and wandering in his mind, so that you could not understand what he said, I felt that there was a protection in his very name. He was a great expense to us, poor fellow, to be sure, and had spent every halfpenny of his own; but there never was a greater calumny than to say his illness and paralysis was brought on by brandy—never a greater calumny! The doctors said it because they

couldn't cure him, and they wanted to excuse their own ignorance and stupidity."

Miss Bouverie was now in the parlour of the Copse, where was seated Mrs. Sharpoint, who suffered considerably from neuralgia, which did not improve her temper. A tall, angular woman, very thin, with hair nearly quite white, and a very sour expression of visage. She did not talk so much as Mrs. Dart, nor was she, on the whole, as agreeable as her sister, being more stingy and less hospitable, with a tendency to remember slights and injuries, either real or imaginary, for a much longer period than Mrs. Dart remembered them. Therefore, perhaps, she was the more terrible of the two. She did not give Miss Bouverie as cordial a welcome as her sister had done, and she seemed occupied immediately in examining her dress from head to foot.

"Are those ugly little hats the fashion now, Ellinor?" she asked, in allusion to the young lady's headgear.

"Why, I believe so. I got this hat quite lately, at Miss Grumberry's."

"Not at all becoming, then, I can tell you. Does not suit your style of face. It requires perfect features to look well in such a hat as that."

"Then I had better sell it at half price, Mrs. Sharpoint," said Ellinor, laughing, and looking remarkably pretty as she did so.

"If I had been your mother I would not have let you buy it—all money thrown away."

"I wonder, my dear, your father can stand the expense you and Dora must be for dress; always getting new fashions for balls and everything," said Mrs. Dart. "I hope you or Dora will make a conquest to-night. You ought to go off first, you know."

"I am not at all in a hurry, Mrs. Dart."

"Oh, that is what all girls say; but they like to be settled for all that. You should think of your father, and how hard it is for him to support and clothe you. If you were boys he would have got rid of you long before this. Isn't Dora nearly twenty?"

"No; not quite nineteen. I am twenty."

"You look more; no one would believe that you were not two-and-twenty."

"Well, there is not much difference. I hope I shall not look very old two years hence."

"I hope you will be married, at all events. You and Dora must make good matches, for the sake of your family; and in such a place as Norham, where there are so many men of fortune coming and going you ought to get off splendidly."

"But I do not care for military men, Mrs. Dart," said Ellinor.

"And who in the world do you care for?" asked the lady, in surprise. "Who are there but military men about Norham that have got any money worth mentioning? To be sure there's that odious son of Lord Halesby. And, by-the-bye, a little bird told me he was very attentive to either you or Dora at the archery ball last month. But you wouldn't be so foolish as to think of him, though he is

a distant relative of your mother's—and much good did her connections on that side of the family ever do her! The Halesbys were all a wretched, mean-spirited pack. I could never bear them. Dear me, how you blush! I suppose, then, you were the one honoured by the attentions of young Lyon? But let me warn you not to mind mere unmeaning flirtation, child. That young man would no more think of marrying without fortune or high birth than he would dream of flying."

"I assure you I have not yet thought anything about Mr. Lyon's views," said Miss Bouverie, who did colour as she spoke. "You know he is a cousin of ours, and we cannot help being acquainted."

"Ah, a very distant cousin, my dear; if he wasn't a lord's son you could soon drop the acquaintance without seeming odd. Depend upon it, he thinks very little about the relationship himself—perhaps never heard of it."

"Oh, yes, Lord Halesby always speaks of

us as relations. When we were down at Halesby, last Easter, he said we were all a family party."

"What a condescension from his lordship! I wonder if he remembers how his grandmother, by his mother's side, stood behind the counter of a shop in London, and sold soap and candles? That was before her father made his fortune by the great tallow speculation; so that, after all, young Lyon hasn't very grand blood in his veins, and if he did take a fancy to you or Dora you would be nearly good enough for him. I suppose if one or other of you got to be 'my lady' you would turn your noses up at us here, like that ridiculous Julia Pincher when she married Sir Philip Gilsmore; she grew so conceited, she would hardly speak to me when we met in the street, and never by any chance visits here now."

Mrs. Dart was here interrupted by a sharp fit of coughing, but she was soon able to con-

tinue speaking of the late Miss Pincher's shortcomings.

"She forgets the time that her great grandmother kept the little crockery shop in Fusty Lane, where I often bought a cup or saucer, and was once cheated out of fourpence-half-penny change. It is a sad world, my dear, and so fleeting. Here to-day and away to-morrow, and nothing but back biting and envy going on all round us. What are you doing for the poor this week? If you are not busy you might take home that piece of calico and cut it up into children's pinafores. Mrs. Sharpont and I did an immensity of charity work last week."

And so these ladies had really done much good for the poor, all through many winters. Envious, spiteful, filled with human weaknesses, they were yet kind to the suffering and the distressed. The tongues that were so sharp to the wealthy or the fortunate were softened when speaking to the poverty-

stricken; and you could have seen them often hurrying hither and thither through the back lanes and the courts of Norham, where the footsteps of gentle folk seldom trod, bearing alms for the sick, or consolation for the afflicted; and this without any ostentation or hypocrisy.

Miss Bouverie was obliged to take wine and cake, and dry her wet boots at the fire before she could think of getting away from the Copse; and it was with a feeling of dismay that she saw the shadow of approaching evening steal over outward objects, as Mrs. Dart kept talking to her of the delinquencies of her acquaintances and neighbours.

"And so, dear, Dawson hasn't written lately?" said Mrs. Dart. "Give him my love when you send him your next letter."

"And mine also," added Mrs. 'Sharpoin, who had not spoken much during Ellinor's visit, owing to neuralgia. "I always thought Dawson was more affectionate than any of you."

“Oh! a fine spirited fellow!” declared Mrs. Dart. “How sweetly he used to come up here at vacation time when he returned from Eton, and what delight he took eating the early pears off the trees against the south wall of the garden. I used to think it was so pretty of him to walk over to the Copse and make himself quite at home with us—so much less formal than you or Dora, who would only take what you were given, and drop in to tea or dinner when you were asked. Oh! yes, Dawson had far more heart than the rest of you, and I will always say you are not half proud enough of him.”

Ellinor could not repress a sigh, and a shadow crossed her face, not of vexation or envy, because her brother was praised, or of annoyance because Mrs. Dart was rude. A presentiment that had gathered greater strength each hour since the morning was weighing on her spirits, and each time Dawson's name was mentioned always brought it more vividly before her mind. She got up at

last to go away, feeling inexpressibly weary and dejected. The shadow of the winter evening creeping over outward things seemed to be stealing over her heart also.

“Good-bye, my dear,” said Mrs. Dart, giving her a hearty kiss at the gate of the tiny lawn. “And remember to come and tell me all about the party, and who you dance with.”

Ellinor said, “Yes,” rather faintly, and then passed out of the gate to the high road.

“She’s a very nice girl,” said Mrs. Dart to herself, as she watched her going along. “A very nice, pretty girl, only I would not like her to know I thought so; it spoils young people so much to think well of themselves—makes them upsetting. I have no doubt she will be greatly admired to-night. Who is that stopping to speak to her? Mr. Trydell, I declare! and he’s turning to walk back with her.”

“How short the days are growing, Miss Bouverie,” was the commonplace remark of Mr. Trydell when he met the young lady.

"And how cold!" said Ellinor, which observation was not at all more brilliant or original, though perfectly correct.

And then the chaplain, in his ministerial capacity, asked for Miss Bouverie's parents and sister, and, being informed that they were very well, thought proper to turn and escort the young lady home, perhaps because the day was so short, and the dusk of evening coming on, but he made no excuse for doing so. Possibly he did not know that the eyes of the excellent Mrs. Dart were upon him, peering at him through the advancing darkness as he moved along beside Ellinor.

"I was out all the morning shopping," she said, "and my sister requested me to return home as soon as possible. We are going to a party this evening."

A party? The chaplain did not like to hear that—not upon religious grounds, for he had not arrived at such a point of strictness as to condemn all social gatherings of a festive character as sinful; but it jarred upon

him somewhat. He was not going to any party that evening; he had not been asked to one, and most certainly he would have refused an invitation of the kind, if sent to him. He did not dance, and he did not flirt, and he knew he should make but a poor figure in a ball-room, even did he consider such a scene a fitting one for a man of his calling to mingle in, which he did not. The time and the energy that many evening parties would expend could not be spared from more serious occupation; and, except to attend an occasional dinner at the Rector's or the General's, Mr. Trydell seldom went from home to enjoy the hospitality of others; yet still this allusion of Miss Bouverie to a party where he was not to be, made an unpleasant feeling steal over him—a dreary, strange sensation scarcely to be defined.

“Do you enjoy evening parties, Miss Bouverie?”

“Yes, very much—when I know the people well. At Sir Ralph Barnard's we nearly

always meet several persons whom we are intimate with."

"And you are going to Sir Ralph Barnard's to-night?"

"Yes."

And Ellinor walked on a little quicker than before; for she was afraid Dora would be impatient at her staying out so long. Mr. Trydell walked on quicker also, and sighed in spite of himself. Ellinor, being preoccupied with her own thoughts, was not disposed to speak much. She was wondering how her father was now—where he had gone to when he left the house after breakfast in the morning, and if he should confide to her mother or herself anything concerning the unpleasant news he had received by the post. People must often try to speak cheerfully when their hearts are very heavy, and it so happened that Miss Bouverie and her companion were low-spirited this evening, though endeavouring to talk agreeably, and say little commonplace things with a light, indifferent air.

"Is not that Captain Bouverie at the other side of the street, walking with Mr. Clarke, the barrack-master?" asked Mr. Trydell, as they got into the town, where the lamps were already lit.

Ellinor looked anxiously across the street, and saw that her father was indeed in company with the person mentioned, and apparently absorbed in earnest conversation. As well as she could judge, he seemed dejected still, with his head drooping and his shoulders more stooped than usual. Captain Bouverie was a well preserved man for his age. His hair was as dark and nearly as luxuriant as in days of youth; and the lines in his face were caused rather by anxiety and frequent ill-humours than by the advance of time alone.

"Are you very intimate with Mr. Clarke?" asked Mr. Trydell.

"We know him pretty well. He is related to the colonel of my brother's regiment, and papa knew him some years before he came to Norham."

"He never goes to any place of worship," said Mr. Trydell, after a pause. "I have never yet seen him at church."

"And yet he seems a steady person."

"So much the worse. Were he very young or thoughtless one might have hopes of a reformation; but he is not young, and his opinions are very decided—a peculiar person altogether."

Ellinor would have liked to steal a look back at her father and his companion, but dared not do so, with Mr. Trydell beside her. On arriving at Church Street the chaplain did not stop at his lodgings. He wished to see Miss Bouverie safe home, and so on he went to Evergreen with her, to the great delight and amusement of Mrs. Barr, who was standing at the door of her house as they passed by.

"I do think Mr. Trydell admires Miss Bouverie," she said to her husband, who had just returned from seeing the memorable easy chair, about which so much had been said

that day, conveyed in safety to the quarters of Captain Cornish, under the superintendence of the disinterested Smith.

"Pooh!" exclaimed Abraham, scornfully; "why do you say that?"

"Why shouldn't I? Don't you think she is worthy to be admired?"

"Ay! but do you think she would fancy him?" he demanded; for being better acquainted with the chaplain than he was with Miss Bouverie, he was naturally disposed to think less of him than he did of her, besides entertaining a man's undervaluing opinion of another man's claims to attractiveness. "I wouldn't believe that either of the Miss Bouveries would fall so low in the world as to think of a man with scarcely a hundred a year, I suppose, in the world."

"Ah! Abraham, isn't goodness better than riches?" asked Mrs. Barr, who, I fear, would not have thought of her own daughter's marriage in such a disinterested spirit as she could contemplate the matrimonial engagements of other people.

“But how do you know so much about the goodness?” inquired Barr, whose unfavourable estimate of human nature in general was, now and then, of late beginning to extend itself even to the chaplain; for had he not been already seven months lodging in his upper rooms, coming in and out of the house several times a day, often under the criticising eye and differently-coloured eyes of the upholsterer, who, in his own estimation, could detect wrong where no other mortal would suspect it, and discover evil where none else might dream of looking for it. Perhaps, also, Abraham was of a contradictory spirit, and wished to quench his wife’s enthusiasm in favour of certain people; but nothing could shake Mrs. Barr’s respect for, and good will towards Mr. Trydell. He had won her confidence since the day he patted her little daughter Linny on the head and gave her sixpence to buy cakes; and by the care he took to clean his boots on the door-mat before walking on her new stair carpets.

CHAPTER VI.

MRS. BARR ASKS ADVICE.

QUITE unconscious, so far, of the good woman's speculations concerning the state of his heart, Mr. Trydell walked on all the way to Evergreen with Miss Bouverie, and on arriving at the gate of the villa it was necessary for them to part. Ellinor did not ask him up to the house even for the sake of politeness. She never forgot that her father's house was not her own, and that a guest of hers might prove unwelcome to Captain

Bouverie. The young girl might have thought that she should be better off in this respect if married and settled in a home of her own, had she not reflection enough to look beyond her own interests and observe the sad example of her mother, which warned her not to be rash in jumping from the frying-pan into the fire. Did not Mrs. Bouverie stand in a more unpleasant position in that house than she did herself? Was she not more a slave—more hopelessly dreary in her daily routine of life? Alas! yes. With every wish to think the best she could of her father and to excuse all his short comings, Ellinor could not help considering that a woman ought to study well the character of any man before entrusting the happiness of her life to his keeping.

So Miss Bouverie had to say "Good-bye, Mr. Trydell," with the sweetest of smiles, which were not very visible in the fading light, and to seem very grateful for his escort, and, on the whole, to be far more agreeable

than she might have thought it necessary to be had she been able to ask him in to see her mother and sister. Mr. Trydell took the hand she gave him and held it in his own, perhaps a second or two longer than was quite requisite for a mere conventional "shake hands" at parting with an ordinary acquaintance; but I do not think Ellinor remarked it, and if she did she would probably have only considered it arose from the kind, paternal interest that a good minister of the Gospel should feel for every member of his flock. Besides being the assistant military chaplain, Mr. Trydell was also curate of Norham, and numbered the Bouveries among his congregation at church on Sundays, when he officiated at eleven o'clock service for the benefit of civilians—two hours later than when he was called upon to do duty for the red and blue-coated heroes who were marched from the barracks at nine o'clock in martial array, and came clattering into the sacred

edifice with much noise of warlike accoutrements.

And thus parting at the gate of Evergreen, Mr. Trydell went his solitary way back to the town, a little thoughtful and dreamy. Was he thinking how hard it was that he had so small an income and no church interest? Perhaps he was ; for the most worthy of clerical men must of necessity think now and then of temporal concerns and wish for worldly promotion.

A vision of increased salary and a quiet parsonage in the country, far remote from the bustle and noise of town life, might possibly have risen before the chaplain's mental view during that walk to Norham, when the sky was growing duskier, and the roar of the rushing river was becoming more distinctly heard, as the bustle of the day declined. A chilly evening it was, and the bright fire which Mrs. Barr had prepared for him cast a comfortable glow on the handsome furniture of his lodging sitting-room ; for though

he did not pay more than a very moderate rent, the upholsterer did not grudge good furniture for his rooms, and if the chaplain had a taste for variety it would have been amply gratified in the arrangements of his present abode, for the sofas, couches, and tables of his apartments underwent a perpetual change. Sometimes, on entering the sitting-room in the morning, he would find the green lounge of the previous day vanished, and replaced by one of crimson damask; or the round ottoman, with which his eye had grown familiar during the past week, deposed in favour of a square one. Never, however, were these alterations in the furniture made for the worse. No shabby chair or sofa found its way to the chaplain's room, and Mr. Trydell was not ill-tempered enough to consider his dignity compromised by this shifting of the upholsterer's chattels, which seemed to afford pleasure to the owners. It amused him—that was all.

Sitting down before the fire which was

blazing and crackling up the chimney, the curate warmed himself, and then began to renew the visionary musings which had occupied his mind during the walk from Evergreen, when Mrs. Barr came in to see if everything was right, and to impart the information that her heart was broken by her son Richard, who would talk of nothing else but enlisting and becoming a soldier.

“Soldiers are all very well in their way, Mr. Trydell,” she said, “and no doubt we couldn’t do without them till all the other countries of the world go by the Bible and return good for evil, and don’t come into other people’s kingdoms to take what they can plunder. I have nothing to say against them in their rank of life as privates of infantry or cavalry, and as to the sergeants, many of them are downright respectable and worthy of our company down in the back parlour of an evening when Abraham isn’t busy; but, taking them as a body, soldiers must be regarded as the scum of the earth,

and you must know what a parent should feel if Richard would mix himself with such scum, and be lost to his family, with every advantage of getting into his father's business, with such interest at the barracks, only he never will take to cabinet making, even so much as to do a bit of mosaic. There's Lucy, she can plane and put a chair together and varnish up any bit of furniture nearly as well as Barr himself, but where's the use of a girl knowing such things? It isn't fitting that a young woman should be an upholsterer, and earn her living like a man; and when she was trying to make a lounge the other day I said to her, 'Lucy, stop that work; it's not woman's work, nor a woman's place to earn her living by anything but her needle.' It's contrary to nature to see her handling a chisel or a gimlet, and might lead to her thinking herself equal to a man; for how could a female that earned thirty shillings or two pounds a week help growing masculine and dreadful? I appeal to you,

as a minister of the church, Mr. Trydell, to know if I'm not right."

"Indeed I don't know, Mrs. Barr. It certainly would be unusual for a young woman to be a cabinet-maker."

"Never was such a thing heard of, sir; and therefore I'd rather to see my daughter begging than the best upholsterer in England. But that's the way I'm tried. None of the boys care a straw for sofas and loungers, and Lucy must have that unnatural taste. It's dreadful to think that girls will take after their fathers mostly. And now, Mr. Trydell, you being such a learned gentleman—attending so many services on Sunday, not to speak of week-day funerals and sick calls often in the dead of the night—ought to be able to tell me if it is likely any young man would think of my daughter as a wife if she was capable of earning her bread as a cabinet maker and upholsterer."

Mr. Trydell reflected for a few minutes before answering this earnest appeal. In his

own rank of life he had rather a prejudice against women working independently for their own benefit. He had been brought up with such a prejudice, and he had never tried to get rid of it, never having thought deeply, if at all, on the subject. Whatever was customary for women to do towards earning a livelihood, he had no objection to—such as going about, on wet days or dry days, to give music lessons at different houses, or letting lodgings, or being milliners, or in fact, doing anything in a small way that would never bring them into particularly brilliant notice, or interfere with the pursuits of his own sex. Perhaps he thought it was safer, on the whole, for women to be mildly despised than unpleasantly envied. He had no fixed ideas on the subject—only a shadowy prejudice, caught from the customary views of other men. Yet a good man he was, kind-hearted and charitable, if not a very original thinker. Lucy Barr, not being of his own rank of life, he could not see any reason why she should not

follow any respectable trade that suited her. Upholstering was not in his line, and seemed a sufficiently humble calling for man or woman; and it did not strike him that the young men of Lucy's position might possibly object to, and be a little jealous of the girl being able to earn a provision upon such a grand scale. So he gave it as his candid opinion that Miss Barr might become an upholsterer, if it so pleased her, and if she were fitted for the business; and that, so far from frightening away would-be husbands, such a capability of earning money ought rather to make her a prize in the matrimonial market.

Mrs. Barr did not at all like this view of the question. Indeed, it must be confessed that though she so frequently demanded advice from the chaplain she rarely took what he offered, unless it precisely coincided with her own opinions.

"You see, sir," she said, after giving a little cough, "it's very responsible to be the mother of boys that won't take to upholster-

ing and will want to enlist, and girls that will insist on knowing all about canary-wood and birds-eye maple, and such like unnatural things. Of course it comes from circumstances and surroundings; and being in a garrison town where every second man you meet is in a red or blue coat, looking so jaunty with their caps on one side that they take the boys' fancy; and from Lucy being always in and out of her father's workshop, and seeing cabinet-making since she was the height of the table."

"But do you not find a great deal of comfort in having your eldest daughter with you, to assist you, since she has grown up and learned to make herself useful?"

"All the fault is, sir, that she wants to be too useful—quite too useful, as you may say, for a woman. She ain't dependent or humble enough. She grieves me talking in that dreadful woman's-rights way, which most of the newspapers laugh at so, and thinking she ought to set up for herself, and make money

more quickly than by her needle. All I'm sorry for is that it's likely needles may soon go out of the world with these sewing machines, and then those people that consider it so beautiful to see a needle in a woman's hand (provided, of course, that she's going to make a proper use of it) won't know what to do. It will be just as it is with the spinning-wheels, they say, which gave their names, I believe, to unmarried females, which lasts still, though I don't think some of them now-a-days as much as saw a spinning wheel, let alone spinning on it; but it shows how ancient and beautiful the law is, and how it scarcely ever alters from the old times. With regard to women, when my sister Sally, who is only twenty-one, was left a trifle of money by her aunt, she was called a 'spinster' by the lawyer in the papers that she used to have to sign her name to, and so we used to laugh at the word, when he told us what it meant, for Sally never as much as knew what spinning was. If they had

called her a milliner it would have seemed quite more natural; but, of course, 'spinster' was the right name for her, since it was law. The law is a very beautiful thing, no doubt, sir, when you ain't obliged to have a great deal to do with it, for it's awful expensive, and it puts one at their wits' end to know the exact meaning of things."

On going downstairs a short time after, Mrs. Barr found her husband in the hall talking to a gentleman, whose sharp, decisive accents made her know he was Mr. Clarke, the barrackmaster of Norham, a very influential person as regarded the upholsterer, and one whom it behoved Barr to treat with deference. Standing in the doorway, while Captain Bouverie waited for him on the pavement outside, Mr. Clarke was giving orders about some article of furniture which he required, and speaking in the tone of authority that always marked his conversation with inferiors—a tone that was particularly distasteful to the cabinet-maker,

who, unhappily, possessed a spirit of independence and a temper easily roused, that was not advantageous to one of his position. Up to the present he had endeavoured to maintain a respectful demeanour in presence of the barrackmaster; but it was often hard for him to restrain an open display of vexation as Mr. Clarke issued mandates in a haughty, imperious way; and Mrs. Barr always had an uneasy feeling whenever he came to give orders for furniture, fearing that her husband might lose control over his temper. So now she stood listening in the dark hall to the sharp accents which fell upon her ear unpleasantly, though they were scarcely so uncourteous as usual. The barrackmaster was evidently in good humour, and not disposed to find fault. Yet, for all that, Mrs. Barr could not shake off a certain presentiment that Abraham would say something that might lead him into trouble with that man. It was with a long breath of relief that she saw his figure retreating in the dim light from

the doorway, and heard the door shut upon him.

"He isn't a gentleman one bit!" exclaimed Barr, when he was gone.

"Never mind, Abraham. He may be good enough, though his manner is not in his favour."

"But he ain't a gentleman!" repeated the upholsterer, whose darkest suspicions of human nature were beginning to fix themselves on the barrackmaster.

And then Mrs. Barr thought it would not be prudent to say any more in defence of a person whose favour was of the utmost consequence to her husband's interests. It would be better to let the subject rest quietly.

Mr. Clarke, who is destined to play a remarkable part in this narrative, joined Captain Bouverie as soon as he quitted the upholsterer's house; and the latter put his arm through that of the barrackmaster, as they walked on together through the town, in the direction of the railway station.

"Thanks, Clarke, again!" said Captain Bouverie, when they were about to part. "I cannot forget your kindness to-day. God knows what a weight has been taken off my mind."

"What I have done was with my whole heart, Bouverie," replied Clarke, earnestly, and speaking with perfect truth. "To serve you, or any of your family, I would do far more than that."

"A brother could not have acted better for me than you this day," said the Captain, giving his friend a most cordial shake of the hand. "And now good-bye for the present. I suppose we will meet you to-night at the General's?"

"I hope so. Make my compliments to Mrs. Bouverie and the young ladies. *Au revoir !*" And the barrackmaster went gaily on his way, filled with some of the pleasantest thoughts he had experienced for a long time. In having put Captain Bouverie under an obligation of a weighty kind that day, he felt that he himself had gained much.

Captain Bouverie mounted the steps to the railway station, and proceeded to send a telegram to London, the words of which ran thus :—

“ All will be right. I have done everything you requested.”

CHAPTER VII.

DORA BOUVERIE EXPRESSES SOME PECULIAR
OPINIONS.

WHEN Miss Bouverie met her sister after that weary day's shopping, it turned out that nothing she had bought happened to be exactly what was wanted, and Dora was consequently a little out of humour, declaring she had a great mind not to go to the party that evening at all, which declaration grieved both her mother and Ellinor, neither of whom had yet discovered that Dora was spoiled by

their indulgence, and only required to be treated with indifference, when she was in what is called a pet, to restore her to a composed frame of mind.

“Did ever any one see such a match as those two ribbons?” she exclaimed, as her sister drew forth sundry small parcels in silver paper from her heavily laden pocket; “and then it is so late there will be no time to alter my gown, and it will look such a fright! I wish I had gone out myself.”

Ellinor could only stand and deliver her parcels, looking quite humble and guilty, as if it were her fault that the shops at Northam were badly supplied with ribbons and laces.

“Oh! if we were not so dreadfully—so hatefully poor, I would not have to worry myself before every party, thinking how shabby I may look; or else fatigue myself to death working at my own dresses!” exclaimed the younger Miss Bouverie, in bitter accents. “It may be all very well for you, Ellinor,

who find it amusing to save and pinch, and do your own needlework ; but it is not so for me. I cannot bear this everlasting poverty. Since I was a child I positively detested it!" and Dora's face grew quite flushed as she spoke.

"Ellinor will do what she can for you," said the poor mother, trying to conciliate her daughter. "You know she does everything quickly and neatly."

"Ah! but she cannot perform miracles. What on earth kept you out so long, Ellinor?"

"After shopping I went to see Mrs. Dart and Mrs. Sharpoint, lest they might be offended if they did not hear of our going to the party to-night."

"What bores those two relations are! always offended at something, and even at the best of times scarcely endurable. How I wish I was out of this horrible hum-drum life, and able to cut Mrs. Dart and Mrs. Sharpoint, and all our disagreeable relatives!"

Ellinor said nothing to this, but her sister saw that she was pained by such an ebullition of ill temper; and consequently the ill temper continued to rage for a considerable length of time, during which Dora said many unkind things, for which she was sorry afterwards, though she did not condescend to say so just at present. Nevertheless, when her excitement subsided, she acknowledged to her own heart what a self-denying, superior minded person Ellinor was—so forgiving and magnanimous and patient.

Like a great many good women, Ellinor worked with her needle a great deal, in spite of her dislike to the occupation, because she could thereby save a few shillings occasionally; for even the economising of a few shillings is often of consequence to ladies who move in a highly respectable class of life. So now Miss Bouverie went about the alteration of her sister's gown with as much alacrity as she could command in her present weary state of mind and body, and while Dora was engaged

in trying how her hair would look in two or three different styles, she was patiently ripping up seams, and remodelling the shape of sleeves.

"You had better go down to dinner, Ellinor," said Dora at last, as she observed her sister working on, without thinking of going down to the dining parlour, though their father had returned home, and was already at dinner.

"I shall finish this work first," said Ellinor.

"Well, perhaps you had better do so, for then my mind would be more at ease. You know, of course, what you are going to wear yourself."

"Oh ! yes ; my white silk."

"I hope people will not begin to wonder how often you have worn it; but it looks as fresh as ever. Mine would be as good only for that detestable Mr. Clarke having spilt coffee over it. I hope he may not be at the party to-night, he is always hovering about

us, and I dislike so much the expression of his queer-looking eyes. Fortunately he hardly ever looks a person straight in the face, but when he does his expression is absolutely frightful."

"He is not a pleasant-looking person certainly," said Ellinor, "but I thought you did not dislike him so much?"

"Because I talk to him, I suppose? Oh! I talk to several people that I dislike," observed Dora, coolly. "There is nothing I like better than pretending to be pleased with the attention of men that I either dislike or care nothing at all about. I would not for the world let them find out how little I think of them, for then, of course, they would go off affronted to somebody else."

"But you should not deceive people, Dora. You may, of course, be polite, but not insincere."

"Oh! I never say anything positively deceitful. I only smile, and let the unfortunate wretches talk to me, and bring me

my cloak, or hold my fan or bouquet; and I look, you know, as if I were delighted with them, and they, [of course, fancy they are dreadfully killing. Why, Ellinor, if I gave up that sort of thing I would have no amusement at parties at all, for there is not a single creature at Norham that I care three straws for.”

“But you might find such coquetry rather dangerous some time or other,” said Ellinor, who was still altering the wonderful blue tarletan. “Even setting aside the want of principle of such behaviour, it might lead to unpleasant consequences.”

“Want of principle!” repeated Dora laughing, “as if there was any principle about flirting! Do you know, Ellinor, I am rather doubtful whether there is any such thing as real falling in love in the world. It is all romance and nonsense, like spirit-rapping or mesmerism. People write such absurd things about women thinking so much of love, as if mamma ever thought about it from one year’s

end to the other—or Mrs. Dart, or Mrs. Sharpoint, or any of the women who keep shops at Norham, and stand behind the counters looking so dreadfully cross and knowing. I read some poetry the other day saying that love formed the very essence of a woman's whole life, and I must say I thought the author a great simpleton."

"Poets generally exaggerate a good deal."

"They ought not to write about what they know nothing of."

"When authors write about women they generally mean very young girls—not steady women past twenty-five or thirty; but when they write of men they mean men of any age, up to sixty or seventy. That is the mistake they make. They will take the character and frivolous behaviour of a girl of eighteen as a type of what women are, and, perhaps, compare this unformed character with that of some learned, steady man twice her age. A girl of eighteen and a youth of the same age will be pretty much alike as to frivolity."

"I feel as if I were as old as the hills," said Dora, tossing her golden hair over her shoulders. "Eighteen years is a very long time. It seems such an age since I was eight or nine, and I do not think the last ten years were very happy. Life seems a dreary sort of business. When one is a child there are lessons to be learned, and games to play, and amusement to be found in running about up trees, and sich like, as Patty says; but someway when you grow up the case is different. You find no pleasure in trundling hoops, even if it were *comme il faut* to continue such pastime after twelve years old, and there is nothing to supply the place of the old childish amusements—nothing for a woman, Ellinor, but flirting and trying to break hearts, and pretending to be in love with people you do not care a farthing about, with an occasional gleam of hope that you may yet make up your mind to marry some rich man, and subside into a comfortable, luxurious, humdrum matron, with lots of money and a fine house,

and plenty of people to toady you, and pretend to respect you greatly, while they backbite you dreadfully all the time. I should like to be envied very much. People must all like it, or they would not be so anxious to get better off than their acquaintances. Only for envy and jealousy good luck would lose half its zest."

Miss Bouverie was obliged to continue working at her sister's gown till the hour for dressing for the party had nearly arrived. She got no dinner, but that did not concern her, for the day's fatigue had taken away her appetite. Her father had dined alone, as he often did, the ladies of the family being accustomed, from motives of economy, and perhaps of peace, to take early dinners of toast and tea, or scraps left from the captain's dinner of the day before, while the head of the house was at the news-room, or gossiping in the town with old officers. Although not quite at ease, Captain Bouverie was much less perturbed than in the morning: he had done

what he could to lessen his own anxiety that day, and he felt that he must now be resigned. Ellinor felt almost afraid to meet her father that evening, lest he might still be suffering from the effects of the news he had received in the morning; but, though not in his usual frame of mind, Captain Bouverie was not disposed to be in ill-humour. He seemed subdued and calm—a state that did not altogether satisfy his elder daughter, for it was new to her, and puzzling. It was late when the girls were ready to set out for the General's, but their father did not scold or say cutting things, as he used to do upon such occasions. He was walking up and down the parlour, and sometimes standing out upon the lawn in front of the house, looking at the winter sky and its innumerable stars—bearing the delay his daughters were occasioning with the utmost patience. Trifles could not vex him now: a great blow had fallen on him, and the means he had taken to ward off a still heavier blow were of a stupendous and desperate

character. It is strange how humble an habitually tyrannical, overbearing man sometimes becomes when stricken severely, either mentally or bodily—how patient and cast down he seems, as if such sore trial were needed to take down his stubborn pride and dependence upon self.

Standing out among the laurels and magnolias, looking at the wintry sky and the stars brightening and fading, Captain Bouverie may have thought of the Great Ruler of the universe more than he had done for years before, because a mighty dread was over him, and he felt what a helpless being he was. For the first time in his life he entertained a hope connected with his daughters. Like a lightning flash it had struck him that one or the other of them might possibly help him in the strait in which he was placed—one or the other of those girls who had been so neglected and uncared for, so little thought of in childhood and youth, so little prized that, when the younger one was born, and someone told him that the

infant was one of the feminine gender, he had looked disappointed, and said, "Pshaw! another girl!" as if it were a most contemptible piece of information. The least possible money had been spent upon the education of those two daughters; it was even hard for their mother to obtain funds to clothe them respectably; and now, when they were grown up, and at an age when people would naturally expect to find them mixing in the world, and dressed as well as other young women in their rank of life, the difficulties of their position seemed to increase. Captain Bouverie appeared to think that his wife and daughters should have no milliner's or dressmaker's bills. Although possessed of a belief in the general extravagance and love of dress of the female sex, it yet seemed to surprise him greatly when he was called upon to pay for new clothes for the ladies of his family, while the amount of his own and his son's tailor's accounts were extremely high; for neither of them liked to be

shabby or out of the fashion, and the fashion of men's clothes is not always the same, any more than women's garments. How could tailors thrive, and accumulate large fortunes, if there were no gentlemen who had a hankering after well-cut coats and elegant waist-coats?

And now, as he looked up at the deep blue sky, the father for the first time in his life began to think that his daughters might be useful to him. One or other might step in and stand between him and ruin. The thought gathered strength each moment as he waited for them, while they were dressing and hurrying to join him, fearful of his displeasure, and expecting many hard speeches.

Nobody spoke much as the trio left the house, having at last set out for the General's. No easy carriage, nor yet fly nor cab, conveyed them on their way. With a proper amount of muffling, and hats deftly poised on their heads, and gowns tucked up from

all possible contact with mud, the young ladies, under their papa's escort, walked to Sir Ralph Barnard's house, Dora taking particular care to keep her thick veil down, and a handkerchief held to her face, to prevent the sharp frosty air from spoiling her complexion, which, being more than ordinarily fine, required, of course, more than ordinary care.

"I hope you intend to look your best to-night, girls," said Captain Bouverie, in a tone of either real or affected pleasantry that rather surprised his daughters.

"I don't know indeed, papa," replied Dora; "this frosty air is very unbecoming. And as to Ellinor, she has had no dinner, and looks like a ghost; but we shall be as good looking as anyone else in the room, I am sure."

"Yes, I am sure you will; you always look very well at parties," said her father.

Miss Bouverie felt surprised. How curious that her father, who had hardly ever

praised them in his life, should begin to be complimentary now ! Could he be in earnest, or only sneering at Dora in a quiet way ?

“ Have you seen Mr. St. George, the new aide-de-camp ? ” asked Dora, emboldened by her father’s previous answer.

“ No, but I hear he is not anything very remarkable.”

“ Who told you so ? ”

“ Mr. Clarke.”

“ Oh, you need not mind a word he says ; he never thinks well of anyone, and he is always trying to take everyone down. I never saw such a jealous person ; he looks quite out of temper when you say any other man is good-looking or agreeable. It is quite amusing to see the thundercloud gathering on his face when you begin to praise some younger and better looking man that happens to be in company with him. In fact, I make a point of praising up several people, whenever I am dancing with him, just to see

how angry it makes him. Surely, he ought to think it time to give up balls and parties at his age."

Captain Bouverie made no remark to that speech, but, nevertheless, he heard it, and did not like it, while Dora continued rattling on in her random way.

"If Mr. Clarke says any harm of Mr. St. George, I shall take a fancy to him immediately, and I shall make a point of saying how delightful he is, whenever I meet the unfortunate barrackmaster, for I am sure he is jealous of him already."

"But you do not imagine Mr. Clarke would care what a silly young girl like you thought of him or anyone else," said Captain Bouverie, after a pause.

"Well, it sometimes strikes me that he does—just a little bit; very foolish of him, of course."

"And does he not care what Ellinor thinks?" asked the father.

"Oh, yes; he is very attentive to her always."

"She would suit him better than you, Dora."

"I, papa?" asked Ellinor, in surprise.

"Yes, you are steadier than Dora, and look better suited to the taste of a man of his age."

"I hope he does not think so," replied Miss Bouverie, laughing. "I am not coquette enough to wish the poor man to begin thinking whether I am suitable or the reverse."

"I should like to break his heart, if he has one, which I am rather doubtful of," said Dora. "Just fancy such a man as Mr. Clarke in love, and taking one's hand, and dropping on his knees! How ridiculous!"

"Men do not drop on their knees now-a-days," said Captain Bouverie.

"And I doubt much whether they ever did," returned Dora. "At all events, I do not think the poor barrackmaster will take it into his head to fall desperately in love with either Ellinor or me; he is too old for any such delusion."

"My dear, he is not so old," said Captain

Bouverie. "If he is thirty-eight it is the utmost of his years. I remember him a very young man, quite a lad, twenty years ago."

Dora's merry laugh rang out upon the night air.

"Dear papa, you might better set up for a romantic lover yourself, for you are a much better looking person than he is. Thirty-eight! Just twenty years older than I am."

"A good, steady, sensible age—a man who knows his own mind, too," said the Captain.

"And I hope he may set his affections upon somebody near his own years," said Dora; "one of the Miss Skinners would suit him nicely, both as to age, appearance, and temper; I shall recommend them to his notice to-night if we meet him."

"My dear, you must not be silly or flip-pant. As to Clarke taking a fancy to either of you, I think you need not be at all alarmed; he is not a marrying man."

"So much the better. When he did not marry before this, he would be unwise to think of changing his condition now," said Dora, picking her steps carefully over a gutter.

Captain Bouverie did not speak for some minutes, and the party walked on in silence; for Dora began to entertain misgivings that she had forgotten her gloves and fan, and Ellinor felt too tired and too much out of spirits to start any new topic of conversation. At length her father broke silence again.

"I suppose you know that this going out to balls and parties in winter is not very pleasant to me," he said, "and the sooner it is put a stop to the better. At my age walking out at night in such weather cannot be very prudent; besides, parties are not very interesting to me."

"Of course not, papa," said Ellinor, wondering every moment more and more at her father's manner rather than at his words.

“And so, then, you see it would be well for you both to try what can be done about getting somebody to take you off my hands,” continued the father.

Dora laughed another silvery, merry laugh.

“Why, papa, you are turning as bad as Mrs. Dart, who is always impressing upon us the necessity of being settled, as she calls it. Oh, how detestable she is after every party, tormenting us with questions as to proposals, and if any one has made an offer or said anything very particular !”

“But you see, my dear, such matters must be thought of; it will not do to go on always as if you were children, with no consideration for the future. Men and women must be provided for, and marriage is the provision for women. You know very well I can give you no fortunes; indeed, if I were to be taken from you I fear you would be very badly off, for I suppose you know a considerable part of my present income is derived from an annuity on my life.”

"But you are not going to die, papa," said Dora, putting her hand through her father's arm. "We should not have such dismal conversation just as we are approaching a scene of festivity, where I intend to be most killing. You must know, papa, I have every intention of captivating the new aide-de-camp, Mr. St. George, and of becoming, finally, Viscountess Killeevan in the peerage of Ireland, as his uncle will die off in due course of time. Did you not hear me reading about the family in our old Peerage this morning, while you were absorbed in that wonderful letter you got?"

"Hush, Dora," whispered Ellinor, who felt an additional weight of anxiety pressing upon her, owing to her father's unaccustomed way of speaking.

"My dear, you must be serious," said Captain Bouverie; "this light way of talking won't do. Young fellows may like silly, flirting speeches, but steady men will not; and if you were as beautiful as an angel you will fail in making any serious impression if

you do not behave with prudence and dignity."

"But you see, papa, I should be sorry to make any serious impression just at present," said Dora. "If somebody took it into his head to fall very seriously in love with me, it would be a very useless piece of business unless I chose to fall in love too."

"Young ladies are not expected to have any particular choice in such matters," said Captain Bouverie. "They generally abide by the council of their elders. A pretty mess women would make of their affairs if they acted always as they chose!"

"I am sure, papa, you would never wish Ellinor or me to marry people we did not like," continued Dora, a little serious this time. "At all events, it is too soon for me to think of settling down into a humdrum married woman. Since I was a child I had a horror of married women, with their dreary faces and haggard looks, so dreadfully careworn and subdued!—especially poor married

women, who seem to have their wits set astray trying to make one shilling go as far as two. I often used to say to myself, when I was ever so young, 'Catch me making a fool of myself and marrying a poor man, and looking like an animal caught in a trap all my life after.' "

"A very elegant *simile*, I must say, and an extremely refined way of thinking altogether for a young lady," said Captain Bouverie, who was getting irritable at last. "It shows how ill you have been brought up when such sentiments, and such a mode of expressing those sentiments, ever were permitted to enter your mind. Who, pray, taught you to think so charmingly and with such originality?"

"No one in the world. The ideas just came into my own head. Everyone used to try to make me think marriage a delightfully happy state for a woman—though rather a dull sort of business for a man; but I could not quite consider that the state was so charming from my observation of married

women, with their pale, anxious faces, and their dozens of teasing children sent off as much as possible out of the way with their ill-tempered nurses, and no more amusement or lightheartedness for the poor, moping, dowdy wives and mothers. In fact, you know what a hopeless, sad-looking woman even dear mamma was. I remember, when I was a little creature, scarcely able to speak plain, I used to wonder at the heavy sighs she gave when I was sitting on her lap!"

Ellinor would have been glad to induce her sister to cease such talking, as her uneasiness was increasing each moment lest her father should quite lose his temper.

"I am sorry, Dora, you allow your tongue such liberties," said Captain Bouverie, growing terribly dignified. "Such a way of thinking and speaking is highly improper for a young woman, who should understand better what the destiny of her sex is. Has it never been impressed upon you that the dearest wish of a good woman's heart is to go

quietly through life, fulfilling in humility and meekness her duty as a wife and mother?"

"I never could receive the impression, papa. I wonder very much what that poor woman thought whose husband was turned out of Mr. Mervyn's gatehouse the other day, because his family was getting too large."

"What has that to do with the present question?"

"Thus much—that children do not seem, after all, such a desirable acquisition. There are too many of them in the world, in my opinion."

"More pretty ideas! They do your mother infinite credit, Dora."

"Don't blame poor, dear, quiet mamma for any strange ideas that I possess; they are all my own, concocted in my own wicked brain, papa," said Dora. "If it depended on my mother, I should have no thoughts at all about anything but saving halfpence and pence. But here we are at the General's. Already I feel growing quite nervous. Ellinor,

you know my superstition about Friday. Shall we find this an unlucky party to-night? Already my heart begins to beat with hope and fear."

Very lightly the young girl spoke those random words, which were yet not without their significance.

The father and daughters were now within a few paces of Sir Ralph Barnard's residence, the windows of which were lit up brilliantly. Captain Bouverie sighed as he looked up at the large house, whose appearance told of wealth and comfort reigning within. The General was not a much older man than he was, yet their position was very different. Pausing before he rang the hall-door bell, the father said, after some hesitation and in a low tone, to his elder daughter—

"Ellinor, if Clarke is here to-night, be civil to him—be very civil to him. I have a particular reason for wishing this; and tell Dora not to dare to offend him in any way."

“Yes, papa,” replied Ellinor, slowly, and as she spoke a strange sinking at the heart made her feel almost faint—she scarcely knew why; perhaps because her father’s voice was trembling.

The door-bell rang, and the summons was answered quickly by a servant, who admitted our trio into a hall brightly lit up.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PARTY.

A BRILLIANT room, and a goodly company therein assembled, with wax lights, and soft couches, and expensive ornaments strewed about, and a hum of subdued conversation striking on the ear—a hum that seemed to cease for a minute or two as the Bouveries entered, and Sir Balph Barnard, with his daughter, went forward to greet them.

Everyone looked at the young ladies who had just made their appearance—some to admire

some to criticise, some to gratify curiosity, but none to deny to their own hearts that they were pretty. Flushed and smiling, with the most guileless expression in the world, Dora Bouverie looked the picture of innocence, with her beautiful little golden head and girlish figure so slight and graceful. Paler, and with darker hair and eyes, her sister was pronounced by most fastidious critics, who had an eye to mind as well as to outward form, to be the more attractive of the two—intellectual looking as well as pretty.

Few people of any rank, high or low, would fail to pronounce Dora Bouverie a pretty girl, with her bright colouring of hair and complexion; yet there were many, especially among the inferior classes, who would have passed Miss Bouverie by without looking twice at her, though her features were more perfect than her sister's, her eyes more expressive; but you required to see the sisters more than once to decide in favour of the elder one's beauty. Dora was a bright pic-

ture, that struck you instantly; Ellinor bore more careful scrutiny, and the variableness of her expression prevented even an intimate acquaintance becoming tired of it.

Sir Ralph Barnard was a fine-looking man of about fifty-five, with a soldierly bearing, but not handsome face; a clever man, who sent jocose and successful letters to the Horse Guards, when other men would have written formal ones and failed to get what they demanded; a man of uncertain temper, prone to explode at times into terrific passions—a sort of human Vesuvius, with periodical fits of ill-humour, very fiery and dreadful; yet in general of agreeable deportment and pleasant manners, especially when entertaining company; very terrible on inspection days, however, riding round the ranks and thundering at any unwary young officer found wanting in military skill or promptness, or ignorant of the names of the soldiers in his troop or company. He gave a cordial welcome to Captain Bouverie and his daughters, as did likewise

Miss Barnard; and while Dora Bouverie was answering these greetings she glanced round the room with a soft, sleepy look, apparently signifying nothing, but in reality meaning a good deal, discovering very quickly who the people were that formed the company. There was Lord Halesby, very stout, and short, and good-humoured looking, talking to Mrs. Carpendale—the wife of Captain Carpendale—who held a staff appointment at Norham—a lady who sang and danced, and rode on horseback so charmingly, that the kind gossips of the neighbourhood hoped to discover in time that she had been an opera singer, or an opera dancer, or a member of an equestrian troupe. She spoke French, Italian, and German; had travelled everywhere, and had the effect of being a beauty without the reality. Her large dark eyes fastened themselves on the face of any one she spoke to with such fixedness that they seemed to bewilder and fascinate in a hawk-like manner. Her husband was hand-

some and elegant, spoke little, and seemed to take the world very easily, declaring Norham to be a charming place, the people delightful, &c., &c. The Misses Skinner, to whom he was now talking, or rather listening, for they had all the talk to themselves, were sharp-eyed young women, very clumsy in their betrayal of the envy and jealousy they felt towards all other young women in their own class of life who happened to reside in the vicinity of Norham. Why neither of them had been married, since it seemed their chief aim to attain the dignity of matronhood since they first "came out," was rather surprising, for they were not half as plain as several young women who had "gone off" in good time; and they entertained a profound respect both for men in general and for matrimony; they were, likewise, most industrious, the neatest and swiftest needlewomen, the most expert housewives, the cleverest managers not only of their own affairs, but of those of everybody else who would permit them to

assist them. Although now considerably past thirty, they had once been in their teens, and therefore their present advanced age had not, it is to be supposed, anything to do with their failure in the matrimonial line. They were still rather pretty, but uncommonly sharp-looking. Perhaps it was owing to the elevated standard they had raised in their own minds, by which to measure the nobility and excellence of the male nature, that they were sometimes, indeed very often, disposed to regard individual men with an eye of severe criticism, and to despise them. Perhaps they had looked too high, and refused offers that seemed to them ineligible. Certain it is that with every wish to be settled, with profound contempt for the single state, with a considerable share of good looks, and an immense stock of that sort of cleverness generally supposed to be attractive to men—cleverness in housekeeping, and understanding all the details of cookery and domestic management—the Miss Skinners were not

married; while ugly girls, stupid girls, portionless girls, girls who knew nothing of housekeeping or little of needlework, went off, as the phrase goes, in a most provoking and incomprehensible manner; and there they were left to haunt ball-rooms and archery fetes, dragging their unfortunate mother about as matron, as if they could not possibly take care of themselves — these clever young women who could buy and sell their poor silly mother, as the saying is, over and over again.

Of course the Miss Skinners were highly ridiculous, reader—highly reprehensible for trying, at thirty-four and upwards, to get houses and servants of their own, to secure a position of some consequence in the world, to escape from what is so extremely laughable—old maidenhood. Poor women! they had no money to speak of as it was; they had a great respect for the ordinances of society; they believed that women ought not to step out of the sphere of wifhood and motherhood—

that it was odious for females to want to work and be independent without male help; and what could they do but try to get husbands in some way? Nevertheless, with a strange inconsistency, everybody condemned the Miss Skinners; and their frequent presence at all festive gatherings within fifteen miles of Northam was considered most reprehensible. The very fact of it being generally rumoured abroad that they wished to be "settled" made people laugh, and the men vowed that they would not be caught by them, which was delightfully amusing, especially as the welfare of the Miss Skinners depended on this pretty contradictory caprice of the men.

Well, these unsuccessful husband-seekers were not rendered any sweeter tempered by their failure in the matrimonial line. They knew very well that people laughed at them and spoke ill of them, and exaggerated their evil deeds. No ill success is so ludicrous as the ill success of the husband-hunter. The

banker who fails, the merchant who comes to ruin, the speculator who loses all he possesses, the old officer who can never get promotion, the clergyman who remains a curate till his head is grey, are never laughed at merely for their want of good fortune; but the young gentlewoman who tries to get a husband to provide for her is a very ridiculous personage—a target for all jests and sneers—when she loses her game, perhaps, because, when she fails in this respect, there is nothing else for her to try her hand at in the way of advancing her prospects in life. Let us laugh and jcer, good friends, and at the same time keep up the old cry about “woman’s mission,” and “woman’s sphere,” and so forth. But to our story. It was really painful to witness the glances the Miss Skinners cast on the Miss Bouveries when those young ladies advanced towards the centre of the room. Dora saw them, and understood them, too, and, I am sorry to say, rather enjoyed them, as, with a sweet smile and approving nod of her innocent

little golden head, she gave the amiable, but unfortunate pair a pleasant token of recognition, *en passant*.

Miss Dora Bouverie knew quite well that her gown—thanks to her sister—fitted her well ; that her hair was dressed most becomingly, and that she looked better even than usual, in spite of the wind and weather, so she felt in a very good humour, and quite able to defy the most spiteful glances envy could level at her.

“How different Miss Dora Bouverie looks sometimes from others,” said Miss Skinner, looking as if she had just swallowed a draught of very strong vinegar. “To-night she seems almost plain.”

“Indeed !” said Captain Carpendale, feeling rather perplexed between a desire to speak the truth and preserve his usual conciliatory manners. “Plain? Yes, perhaps so ; evening rather trying, though charming for the season. Miss Bouveries in general very handsome.”

"Not the elder one, I am sure," said Miss Skinner, emphatically ; "nobody calls Miss Bouverie handsome."

"Ah—indeed? Pretty girl, though. Charming expression—fine eyes."

"So dreadfully sallow; she looks really fearful in the day time."

"Yes, very pale, certainly, but interesting and graceful-looking."

Miss Skinner looked now at Ellinor Bouverie with terrible eyes, which really seemed of a green hue.

Miss Minnie Skinner followed the Miss Bouveries with dark glances also. Could looks have slain them, Ellinor and Dora would have dropped down dead on the spot.

"Who are they?" whispered a tall, striking looking young man, who was standing beside the barrackmaster, Mr. Clarke, forming a strong contrast to the latter, who was scarcely of the middle height, of a pale complexion, once fair, but now sallow and faded, with

light brown hair, without wave or curl, and rather scanty; eyes of a light hazel, looking, in fact, like yellow, and possessing a strange, uncertain expression that gave one the idea of a squint; a nose somewhat nondescript, but rather large than small; thin lips that often wore a sneer; a broad, short chin; a figure neither stout nor slight, but muscular; hands large and sinewy. A strong man, you would say—and you would be right—and a man that looked younger than he was. Such, in appearance, was Allan Clarke, the barrackmaster of Norham, who is to play an important part in this story. Of an old family, with good connections, Clarke had started in life with very little money. At an early age he entered the army, remaining in the military profession for a few years till he attained the rank of lieutenant; he then left it, and proceeded to India, where he obtained a civil appointment at Madras. It was generally supposed that he accumulated money while abroad; but, owing to the

climate, or some other reason best known to himself, Clarke found it expedient to return to Europe when he was little more than five-and-thirty; and after some time he obtained the appointment of barrackmaster and Ordnance storekeeper at Norham. His friends wondered he had not yet married; but India is not a place where our countrymen can pick up wives so easily as in England, unless they are contented to have black ones; and, as it happened, Mr. Clarke had an eye for a very perfect style of European beauty. The striking looking young man beside him, with his elegant figure, handsome dark-eyed face, and aristocratic air, did not make him look any better than usual, as they stood together at that moment in Sir Ralph Barnard's room.

"Who are they?" said the handsome young man, in a low tone.

"Captain Bouverie and his daughters," replied Clarke.

"Quartered here?"

“Not officially—merely residents in the neighbourhood—townspeople you may say.”

“Very pretty!” observed the handsome young man, alluding to the young ladies.

“Any fortunes?”

The barrackmaster shook his head decidedly—more decidedly than he would have shaken it yesterday; and a very acute observer might have seen a peculiar light sparkling in his yellow eyes. Was he glad or sorry Captain Bouverie’s daughters had no fortunes?

“Curious how rarely pretty girls have fortunes,” thought the elegant young man, as his eyes followed the figures of the fair sisters with looks of melting softness that would fully have compensated for the sharp glances of the Miss Skinners, had any compensation been required.

“Shall I introduce you, Mr. St. George, to one of those young ladies?” asked Miss Barnard, coming up to him, leaning on the arm of Mr. Lyon—Lord Halesby’s eldest son.

Mr. St. George murmured something about his willingness to be introduced.

“Which of them?” asked Miss Barnard.

Happening just then to catch a very sweet, dreamy look from the eyes of Dora Bouverie, as they made a second exploring expedition round the room, the young man said,

“To the one with the fair hair, if it is all the same, Miss Barnard.”

And it being quite the same to Miss Barnard, who was making herself very agreeable to every one, and especially to Mr. Lyon, Mr. St. George was forthwith conveyed over to the spot where the Miss Bouveries had taken up their places, and introduced to the younger one, who did not betray, by slightest word or look, the smallest consciousness of ever having heard or thought of the said Mr. St. George in her life before.

“And now we are going to have a quadrille,” said Miss Barnard, looking at Ellinor, who was speaking a few words to Mr. Lyon—that young man of whom a little bird had

told tales to Mrs. Dart, touching the attention he had bestowed at a certain archery ball on the Miss Bouveries ; a gentlemanly, good-looking young man, with a pleasant countenance, frank and good tempered looking, and well-bred, being too conscious and assured of his own position to be under the necessity of adopting conceited airs. Ellinor's face grew bright as she spoke to him, and her pale cheeks flushed a little.

"How is Dawson, and will he come home for Christmas?" he asked.

"I do not know ; that is, perhaps he may," she replied in some confusion, for the thought of her brother troubled her. "I have not heard from him lately."

"We are going to have some friends down at Halesby, at Christmas, and I hope he will be at Norham, then," he said.

"He would like it very much, I am sure," said Ellinor, and now her colour had subsided, and she was pale again.

"We are going to have a quadrille," re-

peated Miss Barnard, "and it is too bad, Miss Bouverie, to ask you to play for us ; but you play so beautifully that you must excuse my doing so. I am a sad bungler at the piano, always going out of time when I attempt dance music."

"Oh, I shall play with great pleasure," said Ellinor, already beginning to unbutton her gloves.

"Did you bring any music?"

"No, but it is of no consequence, as I can play without it."

"Some of Miss Barnard's music would suit you, perhaps," said Mr. Lyon ; "shall I search for some?" and, without heeding Ellinor's "Pray don't mind," &c., &c., he walked with her to the piano, and was soon busied in trying to discover a suitable set of quadrilles, Miss Barnard assisting in the search also, and never losing her agreeability.

"How good-natured!—Miss Bouverie always is playing for dancing," said Miss Skinner, who looked as though again under

the influence of vinegar, as she addressed a young ensign who was dying to dance with Dora Bouverie, and had consequently fallen to the lowest depths of misery when he beheld her monopolised by the new aide-de-camp; "but it is rather unfair of Miss Barnard to ask her to play so often. I wouldn't stand it; I should think it was impertinent, as if I were only asked to parties on purpose to be of use—I wonder she does not refuse."

"I don't know, I am sure," said the sulky youth, with eyes wandering towards Dora Bouverie and her partner, who were now standing up and preparing to look for the requisite *vis-a-vis*.

"If the Bouveries did not make themselves of use, perhaps, they would not be in so much request," continued Miss Skinner; "there are not many musical people about Northam."

"Such pretty girls as they are could not be spared from a party hereabouts," said the

bungling young Ensign, who was made pay for that observation by the most merciless snaps levelled at him all through the ensuing quadrille.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BARRACKMASTER.

HOVERING here and there through the room, now and then speaking to Sir Ralph Barnard, now and then exchanging words confidentially with Captain Bouverie, and very often saying nothing to anyone, Allan Clarke, the barrackmaster, could scarcely be said to derive a great amount of pleasure from his presence at that party. Often, very often, his eyes were fixed upon the golden-haired

girl dancing with Mr. St. George—a girl who, in point of years, might have been his daughter, and yet whose youthful beauty seemed to possess a strong fascination for him. Fair and smiling, with no shadow of any deep care on her lightly pencilled brow, Dora Bouverie had, indeed, cast a powerful spell over that man who had lived so long in the world without being scathed by a passionate love before. Passing fancies he might have had in the old days long ago, when he was a subaltern in his regiment, but nothing like this infatuation, that had come in the days of his sober manhood. No one could be better aware of the folly of encouraging it than he was himself. He, a man already of middle age, with the best part of his life vanished in the past, to think of gaining the love of a girl of less than half his years! It was very absurd, whispered common sense; it was a thing often tried and sometimes successful, whispered hope; and hope was listened to eagerly—her voice was murmuring sweet

words to his troubled soul, even as he stood silently watching the object of his thoughts.

Meanwhile the young lady who had thus disturbed the peace of this man was absorbed in conversation with Mr. St. George, who well knew how to look unutterable things, even if he said nothing very remarkable. A fine pair of eyes and expressive features can save a man a world of troubles as regards making himself agreeable. The smile of a well-cut lip is worth dozens of fine speeches; the glance of a dark eye often more effective than any words could be. Not that the lately arrived aide-de-camp was a simpleton who had no ideas, or a difficulty of clothing them in language. On the contrary, he was very clever, and what he did say was just as much as he chose to say, and no more and no less. A hero he was, too, with deeds of war to heighten his attractions. Had he not fought like a lion in the Crimean campaign, and had he not sent home beautifully-executed drawings of Crimean scenes to

his friends in England, who forthwith dispatched them to the *Illustrated London News*? Yes, Mr. Rodney St. George, of the — Light Infantry, was a very intellectual, accomplished young officer, as well as a brave soldier and a handsome man, and therefore likely to prove very attractive to the ladies of Norham. Men (except such as were jealous of him) liked the aide-de-camp also, and the more junior officers of his own regiment were enthusiastic in their admiration of him; but he was now thrown among strangers, and had to make his way to popularity in a new sphere. A quiet, rather indolent-looking young man, of three-and-twenty—looking, perhaps, a little older, with nothing of bravado about him—one who seemed, just now, much better suited to the drawing-room than the battle-field, and who might be looked upon by envious civilians as a fop and a fool because he was dressed so well, and wore such exquisite boots; but we know, reader, that officers of slovenly habits do not make the

bravest soldiers, and that a man may be a dandy and a warrior too. Likewise we know that clever men and women can be handsome and well-born, and that a man has no need to be devoid of brains because his nose is well-shaped, and his hands are very white, or because he comes of an old and aristocratic family. The accident of birth cannot affect the intellect any more than sex can.

Dora Bouverie had already turned the head of more than one young officer in her Majesty's service, and it was only natural to expect that another would fall an easy prey; but she soon discovered that the new aide-de-camp was unlike the generality of those youthful heroes who were in the habit of fluttering round her, and of walking continually on the road between Evergreen and Norham for the purpose of catching a glimpse of her house, if not of herself. Mr. St. George was very cool, very self-possessed, and did not seem as if he could be conquered very easily. Dora's own sense and shrewdness told her that she

could not hope to catch her intended victim very quickly, and then the game became exciting. It was very hard for Mr. Clarke to watch the quiet flirtation going on between these two young people, who seemed so well suited to each other in years and appearance.

"A very charming girl, St. George," whispered Sir Ralph Barnard, as his aide-de-camp passed him on his way for an ice for Dora; "but not sixpence, I believe—mind, not sixpence—so don't go too far."

The young man smiled, raised his eyebrows slightly, with a look of understanding that seemed to say, "Not the slightest ground for alarm, I assure you," and passed on.

Captain Bouverie watched both his daughters that evening more narrowly than he had ever done before, and he observed that the eyes of the barrackmaster were often fixed upon the younger one. Fathers can be just as acute in detecting admirers of their daughters as mothers are, when they choose to take

any trouble about the matter; and, therefore, it happened that the excellent Captain made the discovery that Mr. Clarke was struck by the attractions of his younger girl; simultaneously with which discovery came a frown of displeasure at the assiduous attention paid to her by the General's new aide-de-camp—a man who could not have much money, let him be of ever such good birth. Having a peer for a grandfather is of little avail towards the maintenance of a wife or paying off debts. Nobody knew better than Captain Bouverie how useless grand connexions were, so that it did not gratify him in the least to see the very elegant Mr. St. George devoting himself so much to Dora. In fact a cloud was gathering on his brow more darkly each moment, and he knew no peace till the General himself led his aide-de-camp away to dance with somebody else.

Now was the time for Allan Clarke to hover near the golden-haired beauty, and venture to ask her to be his partner for the next waltz,

though he had scarcely danced the whole night.

"I was just thinking, Mr. Clarke, that you should begin to think of marrying some one," said the provoking Dora, as the barrack-master accosted her; "and as your welfare has my best wishes, I recommend you to choose one of the Miss Skinners, who are so clever and sweet-looking."

"Thanks, Miss Bouverie; but I do not think my choice will rest in that quarter."

"I suppose you have made up your mind never to marry at all." And then, with a little sigh and a glance across the room to ascertain where her late partner was gone to, the young lady got up to dance with the barrack-master, whom she did what she could to torment by looking at him with the softest glance, and saying everything that was teasing. No sportsman was ever more remorseless than an unscrupulous coquette. Perhaps neither sportsmen nor coquettes understand the depth of pain they inflict; but they both

feel a particular charm in the pursuits they follow.

Dora Bouverie knew quite well that Mr. Clarke admired her; mayhap she knew he loved her, and she rejoiced in the knowledge. There is scarcely a creature more wicked and merciless on the face of the earth than an unreflecting, vain young girl, whose aim is to win hearts and break them, and who is not troubled with any great susceptibility of tender feeling herself. Dora had never been even slightly in love; she laughed at men and their pretty speeches and their flattery; and it amused her to watch the evident despondency of sundry admirers when orders came for certain regiments, or detachments, at Norham to proceed elsewhere. A great deal of this wicked amusement had to be enjoyed in secret; for the elder Miss Bouverie did not approve of unscrupulous coquetry, which, in fact, she considered unprincipled; and, therefore, her younger sister carried on her schemes for the most part privately. She

might tell Ellinor of her lovers; but she did not always tell how she pretended to like them in return, and encouraged them to their destruction. With Mr. Clarke, Dora could not attempt to go so far in her flirtations as with some younger and less acute men. She was afraid to encourage him very much, for there was something in his manner that almost frightened her—something that warned her he would not be trifled with. When he looked into her face with his peculiar eyes, she felt as if he were reading her thoughts; and the impression his glances left upon her mind were not pleasant. When she wished to talk to him in her light provoking way, she always took care to avoid looking straight at him. Once or twice in the course of this night, however, she had been unfortunate enough to encounter more than one earnest gaze from his eyes, which made her entertain curious ideas not particularly flattering to the barrack-master.

“He looks like a person who could com-

mit some great crime," she thought, during one of the pauses in the waltz, when they stopped dancing to gain breath. "I should just imagine a criminal having his type of face."

An uncharitable thought for a charming girl of eighteen to entertain of the man who regarded her as perfect in face and form. Whether the barrack-master had ever yet been guilty of any deed of particular enormity could not be known at present; but certain it is that the time did come when he was to commit one of the gravest sins of humanity—a dark crime, of which he probably did not dream that night in the gay ball-room of Sir Ralph Barnard, with its brilliant lights and well-dressed company. Yet who knows? Do not people often dream dark and sinful dreams in the brightest scenes of gaiety, when the eye sees pleasant things and the ear drinks in sweet music?

Ellinor Bouverie could not be asked always to play for dancing, and she had her bright

gleams of mental sunshine that evening. During two or three dances Gerard Lyon had been her partner, and as she had been acquainted with him since his boyhood, which, after all, was not so very long ago, she enjoyed his company greatly. For the past year or two this young man had been much abroad, and it was only of late he had returned to the neighbourhood of Norham. Lord Halesby was distantly related to Mrs. Bouverie, and she and her family were, of course, always invited to Halesby Park whenever any festive gatherings took place there. Dawson Bouverie, in particular, used to be a good deal at Halesby during vacations, and he and young Lyon were often together boating or shooting before the former entered the army. Had Mrs. Bouverie been at all proud of the Halesby connection, in all likelihood her husband would have prevented her or her daughters ever accepting the Viscount's invitations to his house; but it so happened that she rather disliked going to the Park, or

letting the girls go there, as it took more money to buy dresses suitable for the different occasions, or to give to the numerous servants on the day of departure, than she considered compensated for by the honour of passing a week under his lordship's roof; and for this reason Captain Bouverie always said it was proper to visit Halesby whenever they were asked there. In general, he was prone to dislike his wife's connexions and to laugh at them, but these were only such connexions as she held in esteem herself. Never was there a less ostentatious woman than Mrs. Bouverie. She did not care in the least for vanity or display, and she possessed the inestimable quality of not being a match-making mother, which ought to redeem her from many faults in the eyes of those good people who so strongly condemn manœuvring mammas. So far, neither father nor mother had ever troubled their heads about husbands for Ellinor or Dora Bouverie. Perhaps Mrs. Bouverie thought that women were happier

single than married; perhaps she was too indolent to fret herself on the subject; perhaps she was too unreflecting to consider that unless her daughters married men who could support them in the future, they would run the risk of having no provision whatever. After all, perhaps, the match-making papas and mammas of the world are not always the most selfish or reprehensible of mortals.

Poor old Mrs. Skinner, in her shabby black satin gown and old-fashioned cap, with its sallow white flowers, looked anxiously at every one who spoke or danced with her daughters, hoping to discover a future husband for one or other of them. Weary and jaded she felt, sitting up far into the night hardly talking to anyone, and trying to keep her eyes open by spasmodic efforts. Was it any wonder she dreaded all the young women that stood in the way of those daughters for whose sake she bore so much—had borne so much for more than fifteen long years?

Would she never have rest till her daughters subsided into wives of ineligible men, or became poverty-stricken old maids, living in poky old lodgings over a draper's shop—mayhap, in some obscure street of Norham? Alas! poor woman, perhaps not; and yet there was no being in all the land who would have laughed more scoffingly at the thoughts of young ladies going to parties without matrons or chaperons, or of their being emancipated from all the paltry, unmeaning bondage that inflicts such torments on themselves and everyone connected with them, as this miserable elderly lady, with her rheumatic twinges, and her tendency to fall asleep when chaperoning the Misses Skinner. She was pretty wide awake about the time that Mr. Lyon began to pay attention to Ellinor Bouverie, and her thoughts became of the bitterest description. How was it that those Bouverie girls always contrived to monopolise the best matches in the room? Where was their superiority to other young women?

The younger one was a desperate, shocking flirt, and allured men round her in a shameful manner. But what did the elder one do? Nothing, but sit quiet and speak little, and look as absent as she could. One thing was certain: the Miss Bouveries were becoming a nuisance, and must be put down. More women than the Skinners began that night to think the same. Hunting for husbands, which means hunting for bread and meat and a home, and comforts to keep body and soul together, is often a desperate sort of game; and when a couple of girls appear on the scene of strife, gaining all sorts of advantages, but showing no disposition to retire on their laurels with any particular prize, the matter must be looked to. If the Bouveries would be satisfied and marry, and quit the field, people would not think it so hard; but there they stayed on, "out" for two or three years, beguiling and bewildering eligible men, and taking them away from prudent women who would have married them if they

could. Such conduct could not be allowed to continue. The Miss Bouveries must be put down.

As soon as he could escape from the lady to whom Sir Ralph Barnard had introduced him, Mr. St. George was once more at the side of Dora, who welcomed him back with a smile of real pleasure, his temporary absence having rendered him more precious than before, and they were again together for the rest of the evening. Mr. Clarke now transferred his attentions to Ellinor, who, remembering her father's injunctions, treated him with much civility. She did not know that he cared particularly for either herself or her sister, but she thought it was likely he had obliged her father in some way which should impose gratitude on her and Dora. Miss Bouverie did not think Mr. Clarke a prepossessing person. Without going so far as her sister, who was prone to entertain exaggerated aversions to people without reason, she could not repress a feeling of dislike to the barrack-

master—one of those unaccountable dislikes which the most sensible people will sometimes feel towards certain of their fellow beings.

“ Yet how can I tell what his character may be?” she thought, trying to reason with herself. “ Do we not know that the human face is not always a correct index to the mind? Have not the marks of smallpox, or, perhaps, a scar on the forehead, power to alter the expression of the human countenance, changing it from a frank and open look to one quite the reverse? The shape of an eyelid, the curl of a lip, may have a great deal to do with a sinister cast of face, and the character nothing.”

And so Ellinor endeavoured to scold herself for thinking hardly of Mr. Clarke as he talked to her at the close of that party. She did not know that some ladies had that evening decided to put her and her sister “ down;” but she felt a good deal dejected when she and Dora went to put on their hats and cloaks,

previous to returning home. Dora, on the contrary, was radiant with good-humour and happiness.

"Mr. St. George is a very charming person," she said to her sister. "I think I never saw any one so handsome. Did you?"

"Yes, I think I did; but he is certainly very good-looking and gentlemanly."

"He seems so unlike other people. I am so glad he has come to Norham!"

"Don't fall in love with him, however," said Ellinor.

"Oh! of course not. You know it is very hard to win my hard heart; but even suppose I did fall in love with Mr. St. George, what harm would it be?"

"None at all, provided the attachment were mutual," said Ellinor, smiling; "but it might be rather unfortunate for the love to be all on one side."

"Do not fear about that, Ellinor. I shall never make a fool of myself," said Dora, confidently.

And now, being equipped for walking homewards, the young ladies found that they were to have more than the escort of their father. Mr. St. George and Mr. Clarke were in the hall, talking to Captain Bouverie.

"The night is so charming, Miss Bouverie, it is quite delightful to think of walking," said the aide-de-camp, in a low voice, to Dora.

"We have no carriage, and we always walk when the weather is fine," replied the young lady, promptly.

"I suppose I may be permitted to accompany you this time."

"Oh! yes, if you like to come," said Dora, frankly. Neither she nor Mr. St. George observing that Captain Bouverie looked rather cross, and, the matter being settled thus quickly, the aide-de-camp prepared to accompany the Bouverie party in their homeward walk, attaching himself at once to Dora. Thereupon Mr. Clarke was obliged to fall back with Ellinor and her father, who were

in the rear of the two others ; but he did not disturb Miss Bouverie's meditations by much conversation, as he was occupied chiefly in thinking of the pair on before him, who were almost as distinctly visible as if it were noon-day, so brightly shone the moon.

"How fine the water looks to-night!" said Dora, stopping, as the party reached the bridge that spanned the river. "I like to see it rushing along so tumultuously."

"Very fine," acquiesced her companion, and they lingered to admire the moonbeams playing on the foaming waters. The rest of the party stopped too, and all looked at the river, as with a hoarse roar it tumbled on its way.

"What a dreadful death drowning must be!" said Dora, turning with a shiver from her contemplation of the turbulent water; "of all deaths I should imagine it to be the most horrible."

"People who have been restored to consciousness after suffering all the peril of death

by drowning have declared that it was rather a pleasant sensation," replied Mr. St. George.

"At all events, pleasant or unpleasant, the process does not last very long," said Mr. Clarke, as he leaned over the bridge.

"If one could choose his own death, I should prefer being shot to being drowned," resumed the aide-de-camp, as his thoughts went back to many a scene of deadly strife he had witnessed; "in fact, I should prefer it to any kind of death."

"A fitting speech for a soldier," said Dora, smiling; "you must have had experience of plenty of such deaths for your friends, if not for yourself, in the Crimea."

"I have seen men lying dead after a battle, looking quite as if living, struck down instantaneously without a struggle; I think their deaths were painless."

"But the aim must be directed to some very vital spot to produce sudden death," said Dora.

"Wounds in the brain or heart cause instantaneous death," replied Mr. St. George.

"But there is something frightful in the idea of sudden death; one would almost prefer the warning of pain to being cut off without a moment's preparation," said Dora.

"It makes very little difference how we make our exit from this life," said the barrack-master, who was now standing beside Dora. "The struggle is soon over, and there is the end of it."

"Only as far as this world is concerned," said Ellinor, gravely. "Time may end, but eternity begins," and then there was a pause.

"So people die instantly, when wounded in the heart?" said Dora, as she and Mr. St. George were walking on again together.

"Yes, when wounded by a gunshot or bayonet; but sometimes people linger on pretty long when suffering from wounds in the heart caused by other means scarcely less deadly."

Dora turned quickly round, and looked at her companion as he finished speaking.

Something in his tone made her understand very quickly what he meant. She blushed in the moonlight as he returned her look with one that seemed to her very expressive, and she said no more for a long time. The party went on again, leaving the river to roar and foam under the starlit sky, and all seemed rather disposed to thoughtfulness. Perhaps in after days more than one member of that company passing over the bridge, at that midnight hour, recalled distinctly the conversation which has just been narrated.

They all went on to Evergreen, and both Mr. Clarke and Mr. St. George took leave of the Bouveries at the gate of the villa. Perhaps the aide-de-camp did not think the residence of the Bouveries a very imposing mansion; but he was not such a snob as to judge of people by their wealth or the grandeur of their belongings. Did he not know that the younger members of great and lofty

houses had often to live in very humble dwellings? The head of a family may be a grand personage; but his brothers and sisters, his younger children, nephews and cousins, all with the same blood running in their veins as himself, are very different people. His own father, for instance, the Honourable and Reverend Charles St. George, Rector of Gartquil, in the county of Donegal, had not a much better house than many a squireen in the neighbourhood; whereas his uncle, Lord Killeevan, dwelt in a princely mansion, and ruled over acres innumerable; yet the rector never thought he was inferior to his brother, who only happened to have had the luck to come into the world a year or two in advance of himself, and thereby gained the advantage of the heirship. The viscount and the rector were on the best of terms, and no uncle was ever more proud of a nephew than was Lord Killeevan of his handsome, gallant young relative, Rodney St. George,

who was now acting as aide-de-camp to General Barnard, at Norham.

"I hope you spent a pleasant evening, girls," said Captain Bouverie, who drew a long breath as he entered his own hall-door.

"Oh! delightful, papa," replied Dora, ardently; "is he not most charming?"

"Who?"

"Mr. St. George, of course."

"A conceited, empty-headed young fellow, child, not to be trusted once he is out of sight," was the father's disheartening speech.

"A practised flirt, ready to say the same thing to every young woman he meets."

"That is your man's undervaluing opinion of him, papa," said Dora; "but not a true one, I am sure."

"Believe me, my dear, I know these sort of young coxcombs better than you do; you cannot put faith in a word they say."

"They care as little for breaking hearts, I suppose, as some young ladies do," said

Ellinor, looking over at her sister with a smile.

“ Ah! I do not mind what you both say—I know my hero is matchless.”

And so, determined to think the best of her new acquaintance, Dora ran to her room to ponder over all he had said, and all he had looked in the course of that memorable night—memorable, because the young girl never afterwards forgot it. The heart, hitherto invulnerable, had just received the first wound that ever grazed it—a wound scarcely deep enough as yet to be felt, but existing, nevertheless; more pleasant than painful so far. But how about the future?

While Ellinor was employed in getting some wine and water for her father, who seemed exhausted and low-spirited, Dora was standing at her bedroom window, still in her evening dress, buried in unwonted thought; happy and hopeful enough, yet a little subdued also; not in her usual high spirits, and rather more excited than upon ordinary occa-

sions after a party. Had she any presentiment that a crisis in her own fate was approaching? A calm night it was. Wonderful for the season; with the soft moonlight streaming on outward things—shining on the evergreens in front of the villa, and on the silent highway beyond the gate. Everything silent but the rush and swell of the river, ever flowing onwards with its hollow roar.

“I wonder if superstitious people would think there was anything unlucky in this party having taken place on a Friday,” thought Dora, as she still stood looking out; “my own idea is, that I should rather make the acquaintance of a person I cared much about on any other day; however, I suppose it is all nonsense.”

And so she stayed on, dreaming dreams till her sister came to warn her of the lateness of the hour, and the necessity of retiring immediately to rest. That memorable Friday, the 4th of December, had already ended; the midnight hour was long past. Whether

the sisters slept happily through the first hours of the next morning is not so certain as that their father rested not at all, never closing his eyes even to try to slumber, as hour after hour of darkness passed, leaving him still wakeful, with a heavy weight of care pressing on his mind—not the less heavy, perhaps, that he had a shadowy idea of how far he had brought it on himself, by his own folly and shortsightedness, not to use harsher terms.

CHAPTER X.

A LONELY TRAVELLER.

“WHEN will the next train for Norham start?” asked a young woman with a dark, handsome face, and a rather unsettled expression of eye, as she entered the railway station at Lidcombe, on the line from London to Norham. She wore shabby black garments that might once have been respectable, but they were now dusty and travel-stained, and a good deal worn. Her features were very perfect, but the expression of the countenance

was not agreeable, the lips being compressed, and the forehead marked by a strong line that told either of some mental or bodily pain, and gave a stern cast to the face.

"The next train to Norham will start in an hour and three-quarters," said the railway official whom the young woman had addressed, as he glanced at the clock of the little country station, and saw where the hour and minute hands were pointing.

"An hour and three-quarters," repeated the woman with a sigh, seating herself on a bench in the third-class waiting-room. She was very weary and faint, but not hungry, though she had eaten nothing but a biscuit all the day, and it was now far advanced in the afternoon. A raw day it was, with sleet sometimes dropping from the grey sky, and twirling round and round in the air before finally settling on the ground—a day when the feet and hands are chill, and never grow warm, even by sharp walking, but become

almost numb when you sit still—a dreary day to be tired and footsore, with a very scanty supply of money, and no hope except what may be derived from the thought of revenge.

“A cold day,” said the railway porter, who was now at liberty to talk and whistle, as no train was expected near Lidcombe for a considerable length of time.

“Yes, very cold,” answered the young woman, in a hoarse voice—such a voice as one gets when he or she has passed long hours without refreshment, and has a throat parched with the fever of some great mental excitement.

“Are you going to Norham?” inquired the porter, as he stood contemplating a hamper and two brown paper parcels which stood waiting for some train in a corner. It was a very small station, and the so-called parcel-office was merely a little enclosure off the third-class waiting-room, incapable of hold-

ing anything but the desk of the official who made the entries of parcels arriving and departing.

"Yes," said the young woman.

"Is your luggage up yet?"

"All I require I have with me," and the speaker tried to clear her husky throat.

The porter glanced at the small bundle in her hand, and then whistled drearily, sauntering to and fro, with his hands in his pockets. There was no hope of any pleasant chat with the reserved young woman with the wild black eyes, and therefore, as she would not contribute in any way to his enjoyment, the porter began to regard her with that undervaluing opinion which men generally entertain for women, when they are not likely to add to their gratification or amusement. Every man, let him be ever so ignorant, is aware of how little account a woman is, in general, socially considered—so dependent, so helpless; not because of her own natural weakness—for

men do not, as a general principle, go through the world fighting their way by dint of bodily strength any more than women do—but because of those laws and customs which bind her hands, and keep her in a state of slavery which debases her. Does not the meanest man, with the most scanty supply of ideas, untaught and unlettered, just a shade removed in intellect from the beasts that perish, comprehend that the woman, be she high or low, who has no father or husband to support her, stands but a poor chance of having any very comfortable provision. And this much every woman may know, that in a world where honour is given chiefly to success, and social influence, and wealth, there is but little real respect felt for the sex which is in general so poor, and so obscure, and so unable to rise up, by self help, from original poverty to a better position. People boast of the freedom of England—its glorious laws, the liberty of British subjects—the lowest of whom may rise by industry and

talent to any social height; but this liberty only extends to one sex. It is my own opinion that women stand still pretty much where they stood before Magna Charta was ever dreamed of, and that their privileges were not much fewer in the feudal times of the Conqueror than they are in the reign of her Majesty Queen Victoria. Your Reform Bills, &c., may be all of great consequence to Englishmen, but what are they to Englishwomen? Very little, good reader. The laws concerning the women of England are, for the most part, older than general civilisation, and the customs touching them which held good in barbarous ages continue in force still. The impression that the young woman at Lidcombe railway station made on the porter in his leisure moments was not favourable; so he snuffed, and whistled, and continued sauntering about, pretending not to be thinking on any account of her, now and then touching up the one hamper and the two brown paper parcels with his foot, by

way of pastime. At length the girl spoke again :

“ What is the fare from this to Norham ? ” she asked, after counting the contents of her purse.

“ Three shillings in the third class,” replied the porter, without looking at her.

“ I cannot afford that much,” thought the young woman ; “ I have only five-and-six-pence altogether.”

What was to be done ? Could she possibly walk any farther, she who had already travelled so many miles on foot ? Yes, strength might be left her still to save a few pence. Money is hard to earn, and a penny saved is a penny gained—a lesson that many a woman is obliged to learn, even when not as forlorn as the stranger at Lidcombe station.

“ What is the name of the next station to Norham ? ” she inquired.

“ The next station is Halesby, nine miles from Norham,” said the porter.

“ And the fare to that ? ”

"Two-and-twopence. You are a stranger to the line, I suppose?"

"I never was on it before."

"You have friends at Norham, it's likely?"

"Not many," said the woman, evasively, and again she relapsed into silence.

The shadow of the coming winter evening was already beginning to fall. Who can tell how dreary the world at that hour seemed to the traveller waiting in that small country station? Perhaps, however, no time or season would have made much difference as far as she was concerned. All the warmth and brightness of summer could not have given her more ease of mind than she possessed on that chilly winter afternoon.

"Money would benefit me," she thought. "How much I could hope to do if by any means I was able to get what I require!"

The future presented a dark picture to this woman's mental vision. The years of her life scarcely as yet numbered eighteen,

though she looked older, and already she felt as if there were little left to live for. What was bringing her to the neighbourhood of Norham, in that bleak December weather, so poor, so unprotected, apparently so uncared for. She did not look like a servant, either in or out of place ; she had not the aspect of a person who had ever been accustomed to hard work ; her hands were small and white, her complexion pale and delicate. In spite of her shabby clothes, she looked as though she belonged to a respectable class of life—her figure being slight, and even graceful ; her head small, and beautifully moulded. When her eye lost its unsettled, anxious expression, her face seemed very lovely ; but it was only at rare intervals that this happened.

Is there anything much more dreary than sitting in a railway station waiting for a train on a raw winter day, with nothing to look at but time-tables posted on the walls, or a few advertisements of cheap coats and waistcoats?

How the minutes appear to lag at such times, each one seeming as long as two under other circumstances. It was growing very dark when the train from London came puffing up at last to Lidcombe, and then our solitary traveller got her ticket for Halesby, and took her place in a third-class carriage, feeling relieved to get away from the inquisitive railway porter, and the chilly, third-class waiting room.

"Do you object to smoking, miss?" asked a soldier, who happened to be in the carriage which the young woman had got into.

"No," she answered, with more politeness than truth; and then the air around became quickly tainted with the odour of tobacco smoke.

"Going down to Norham?" was the next inquiry of her military fellow-passenger.

"Yes, but I stop at Halesby first," answered the young woman, who was afraid not to answer civilly, lest her companion might be disagreeable.

"A wonderful large garrison is Norham," continued the soldier, still puffing away at his pipe.

"Are there a great many soldiers and officers there?"

"No end of them—horse and foot."

The young woman felt a little posed.

"Do they generally remain long at Norham?"

"The different regiments? Oh! yes, sometimes very long, but not as a general rule."

"Are there many inhabitants at Norham?"

"Well, it's a pretty considerable-sized town, but the military add greatly to the population."

"Suppose this journey of mine is all a wildgoose chase!" thought the young woman leaning against the hard side of the carriage. "But even if it is, what does it signify? May I not as well be in one place as another? The world is all alike to me now."

She did not feel disposed to talk any more, and the journey was soon over. It was past four when the train reached Halesby—a town of considerable dimensions, neatly kept and prettily situated, though this was not very apparent in the dusky light of the winter evening.

When our traveller got out of the train here she saw that the lamps were already lit, and preparations being made for the coming night; yet still she would not rest at Halesby, she must try and get on to Norham late as it was. Two hours of swift walking would bring her over the eight or nine miles before seven o'clock. With something of recklessness in her disregard of fatigue and want of refreshment, she never paused to take any food, or even a drink of water, but, having asked the way to Norham, set out at once on foot for that town. The person who told her the direction said the road was nearly straight on, without turning for the whole way. She would easily get to Norham before seven o'clock—ah! very easily

if she had strength for the undertaking, but she had not. For nearly two miles she walked along the straight road as directed, and then her strength began to give way. The moon had commenced to shine before the daylight quite departed, so that the evening was not dark.

The traveller could see that she was passing over a road flanked on either side by high walls, beyond which stately trees, grand even in their bare leaflessness, reared their heads, and she knew that she was in the vicinity of a gentleman's country seat.

"No haven of rest for me!" she thought sadly, as weakness of body overcame the courage despair had given her for a time. "If there was a poorer dwelling near I might stop and beg for something."

A few steps more and she came to a grand old gateway, grey and massive in its adornments, with much overhanging ivy, and a picturesque gate lodge of antique design standing beside it. One of the small side

gates was open, and she went through it, feeling faint and giddy.

The door of the gate lodge was closed, but she knocked with her hand against it. No answer. Again she knocked—this time more loudly than before, but with the same result. Then she ventured to turn the door latch cautiously, hoping if any one were inside to attract notice; but though the door opened to admit a view of the interior the girl heard no sound that denoted habitation. She saw a neatly furnished room, containing old-fashioned mahogany tables, chairs and a sofa. A bright fire was burning in the grate, casting light upon surrounding objects, and diffusing a pleasant warmth through the atmosphere. After a momentary pause the traveller knocked loudly on the window bench with a large key which stood there, and this summons was at length answered by a woman dressed in the usual costume of peasant matrons, who came from an inner room bearing a candle in her hand. She started at the

sight of the young woman standing within the house.

"Was the door open?" she asked in a Scotch accent, with a good deal of asperity, as she fixed a pair of twinkling black eyes on the stranger's face.

"No, I opened it," said the girl faintly.

"You opened it, finding it shut?" returned the woman, still keeping her eyes fastened on the traveller's countenance, evidently with the design of confounding her by such piercing scrutiny. "You turned the door-latch and walked in?"

"I knocked several times and got no answer," replied the poor girl, whose courage was growing less and less every moment.

"You knocked? Ahem; and then turned the door-latch and entered the house?" said the woman, looking round the apartment with a wondering air—perhaps to let the stranger see that she was making a survey of the articles it contained—several books and nick-nacks being laid out on the tables, any of

which might easily be abstracted by a thief. And yet the young woman in her shabby black cothes did not in the least look like a burglar ; her face was almost deathlike in its paleness, and her eyes had lost during the last two hours nearly all their brilliancy and wildness

“What brought you here at this hour? What do you want?” asked the mistress of the quaint little lodge, still gazing hardly at the trembling creature before her.

“I am very ill. I have walked a long way, and I am not able to go a step farther,” was the traveller’s reply, as she leaned against the window-bench.

“But you can’t expect to stay here,” said the woman, growing rather more energetic. “His lordship allows no people—no strollers—to come about the place. He would be very angry, in fact, if he thought we should encourage such persons.”

“Some water, at least, for pity’s sake,” urged the girl in desperation.

"I may let you have a glass of water, of course," said the woman, raising her eyebrows, and looking as if even that condescension would be rather trying to her ; " but I must impress upon you the necessity of quitting the house immediately. Your way of coming into it was not exactly such as to make people think well of you."

Is it not well that those persons who are exposed continually to insults and slights, and rude speeches, lose at length their sensibility and grow callous? One of the first great miseries of being poor and unfortunate is the disrespect with which the world in general treats the poverty-stricken who are obliged to ask for aid or relief.

" If you could let me rest here for half an hour, I should feel so thankful," murmured the young woman as she took the water given to her.

" Half an hour ! And where, pray, would you go to then ?" demanded the woman sharply. " At the end of the half hour you

would just be as little able to go on your journey as you are this minute. You had better go back at once to Halesby, if you have come from there, and try to get a lodging, for I daresay many people would object taking you in if you delay till it is much later."

"I never could walk back as far as Halesby."

"Then, goodness me! what can I do for you? My husband is only his lordship's under-gardener, and I take care of this gate lodge. We have no power to harbour strangers in this way; in fact, we should get turned off, no doubt, if we did it. So you see there is nothing for you to do but get up and go away, if you please."

"God forgive you," said the girl, as her eyes flashed for a moment very brightly; "you are a cruel woman, and yet I daresay you consider yourself a Christian!"

"Oh, if it comes to abuse and threats I am in a pretty way!" said the gatekeeper, getting

extremely indignant. "If my husband was here I should appeal to him to see that you left the house ; but as it is"—and an expressive glance of her black eyes cast round the apartment was intended to convey a sense of her utter inability to help herself in this terrible emergency.

"I shall go without being turned out by any force," said the stranger, gasping a little for breath, as she went slowly towards the door.

The woman of the lodge watched her as she did so, and perhaps a faint spark of remorseful feeling was kindled in her breast as she saw how feebly the girl walked. She was hesitating how she should proceed—whether to call the stranger back, and let her rest, or allow her to set forth on her way, weak and weary as she was—when the matter was partly decided by the broken-down traveller falling heavily against the half-closed door, in a fainting state.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE GATE-LODGE.

What was to be done now? Mrs. M'Stare, the gatekeeper, felt extremely puzzled to know how to proceed; but it was necessary to exert herself quickly, and endeavour to convey the poor stranger to the sofa and try to revive her.

"If she should die here," she said to herself, "it will bring Andy and me into a pretty hobble."

So she did everything in her power to prevent such a catastrophe.

The worn-out traveller remained a long time unconscious. Mrs. M'Stare was almost at her wits' end with consternation before she could succeed in restoring the young woman's senses. As soon as she observed any sign of recovery she determined to run for help to the great house of her master, and seek the assistance of some of the servants there.

"It may be all a bit of cunning, of course," she said to herself, as she cast a glance at the still figure of the girl on the sofa; "but, even so, I'll guard against any tricks by locking the door when I leave the lodge. Goodness gracious me, what trouble people get into all of a sudden! Here was I getting ready Andy's supper, never dreaming of strollers or robbers, or people fainting, when I'm upset and put about this way in the twinkling of an eye!"

The woman looked into the inner room, where an infant lay asleep in a little cot, and

then locked the door of the apartment; after which she spoke a few words to the young woman, who was now conscious, but too weak to be able to stir from her reclining position, intimating that she was going out for a few minutes, and would return with a little wine, as, of course, she had none in the gate-lodge. The girl murmured a word or two of thanks, and then closed her eyes, as if she wished to sleep; but a weight, as of iron, seemed to press upon her whole frame, and she could scarcely lift head or arm. A mighty power had prostrated all her strength, as if some giant hand had been laid upon her. Thoughts of death came before her mind, and she felt persuaded that her last hour could not be far distant; yet this persuasion did not terrify her; she was too weak even to entertain great fear upon any subject. One requires a certain degree of bodily strength to be enabled to suffer deeply either mentally or physically. Perhaps the idea of death had rather a soothing effect upon her. Should she pass away

into rest everlasting, would it not be well? Rest was what she longed for—rest would be Heaven in itself. No more fatigue of body or soul—worldly strife and despair over for ever! But was such rest for her? Had she earned any claim to the peace that passeth understanding? Not those who merely cry “Lord! Lord!” at the last supreme hour can gain admittance within the narrow gate that leads to eternal rest. Floating through her weary brain came many thoughts, but none sufficiently forcible to plunge her into any great depth of fear or to raise her up to any exalted pitch of hope. More than half lifeless as she was, her feelings and thoughts were all vague and dreamy. Whatever she had done amiss in her short life, she had no power to repent of evil deeds at that time, even if such repentance could be of avail, should the Angel of Death come to call her forth that night; but, in mercy, this poor wanderer was spared so hasty a summons. Already tender hands were bringing relief to

her. Be she what she might, a kind heart had determined that she should not have to face the bitter winter blast any more that night; but how or where she spent the long hours of that night she did not know herself. Often scarcely conscious though not asleep, and occasionally buried in a slumber of strange stillness, she was only able to take note of anything round her at rare intervals. That she had been moved from her place on the sofa of the gate-lodge she was partly aware, as also that the light of a candle seemed always burning whenever she opened her eyes, and that some one sat watching beside her through many hours that seemed as long as whole days and nights. What length of time she really lay there, prostrated and only semi-conscious, she could never distinctly recall; but when the first weary night was over, there came days and nights of even deeper stupor and helplessness to succeed it.

The snow was thick upon the ground when the first gleam of consciousness dawned upon

the girl's brain—when she was able to collect her senses and utter speech—

“Where am I?” she asked of an old woman sitting beside her, in the grey light of a winter evening.

“In the gate-lodge still,” was the reply.

“Where I came to beg for rest and a drink of water.”

“Well, I suppose so.”

“And who does it belong to?”

“To Andrew M'Stare and his wife.”

“And you are not the woman who wished to turn me out that evening?”

“No, I never wished the like,” said the old dame; “and I don't believe anyone else did either.”

“Oh, yes, somebody did. How long ago is it since I came?”

“Well, it's nigh a week and more.”

“And I have been lying here all that time?”

“Yes, very ill and helpless; and not in your right senses.”

"Have I raved or talked wildly during that time?"

"Well, perhaps you may have; I didn't think particular about what you said."

"Was anyone else watching me beside you?"

"Oh, yes; Mrs. M'Stare did the duty sometimes."

"Is Mrs. M'Stare the owner of this house?"

"Yes, the gate-keeper; though, for the matter of that, she ain't the owner any more than myself. She only gets the house because she minds the gate."

"But she is the mistress of it for all that."

"Oh, to be sure she is; and she likes it to be known, too."

The old dame evidently rather disliked Mrs. M'Stare, as she envied her the possession of the quaint little gate-lodge.

"I think I am well enough to leave the house now," said the young woman, after

some minutes of silence, during which she was thinking.

"That isn't likely. At all events, I don't believe you'll be let go away yet."

"Is Mrs. M'Stare, then, so kind as to wish me to be a burthen on her any longer?"

"God help you, child! it ain't Mrs. M'Stare that cares a straw when or where you go. She isn't of that sort. If it depended on her you might be dead and buried now."

"And who am I to thank for being here?"

"People that paid handsome for it, good girl; though why they shouldn't pay for it, when they have got such oceans of money, I can't tell; only others as rich don't do the same. Anyway, Mrs. M'Stare has made well by it, and she isn't in any hurry to turn you out; it's profitable to her, though she has to sleep up at the great house and let you keep this room. Don't you know there are people that will do anything for money? They'll turn their house upside down, and

put themselves to any trouble to gain a shilling, though they wouldn't move an eye in their head, maybe, for love or charity. They would scarce give you a civil word without reward; but they would torture themselves for a five-shilling piece."

"But who would care to pay Mrs. M'Stare for letting me stay here?"

"The people who are so rich that they don't care how they spend their money."

"The owner of this large demesne, I suppose?"

"Yes, the very same; but he wouldn't do it only for somebody else."

The invalid was too weak to ask any more questions of this grumbling old woman, who appeared to think that nobody was to be thanked for anything, and she relapsed into silence and partial stupor again. Poor old woman sitting beside her, with horny, wrinkled hands, and stiff grizzled hair, and ill-clad figure, how could she feel otherwise than bitterly on that winter day?

“The workhouse, after all, would be better than this,” she thought, as she crouched down on her low seat beside the bed, and leaned her head on her hands. “Ay, far better, as it is; and yet I thought to live out my life without ever going to the union. God be praised! it’s a very dark world for the poor; but the next, maybe, will be even worse for the rich!”

Then she began to think of the stranger lying so ill before her—who was she? Where did she come from?

“She’s very young, and she’s very handsome, and she’s like a lady; and, of course, there’s something wrong, or she wouldn’t be here all desolate and forlorn. To my mind she might as well be let die as not; for there isn’t much good in a woman’s life, even at the best of times; and when it’s the worst of times, God help her—that’s all!”

And then the old woman begun to think she would have a look at the small bundle lying on the table near the bed; and while

the invalid lay half-slumbering and unconscious, she softly arose, and cautiously examined the contents of the parcel, first discovering a handkerchief of fine texture, which excited her curiosity.

“A good cambric handkerchief, too,” thought the old woman, judging of it by touch, rather than by sight, for had she not often washed such handkerchiefs for the wealthy in the course of her life? “And there’s a little box, maybe with money in it; people have such odd purses now-a-days,” she added, as her eye was caught by a small morocco case, which she laid hold of with trembling, awkward hands, fumbling many minutes at it before she touched by accident the little spring by which it opened and closed. No money, however, greeted her vision from the interior of the case. A portrait was what she saw dimly through the mist over her aged eyes.

“A picture of somebody,” she muttered, trying to pick it out of the case that she

might hold it near to the light. "The likeness of a young gentleman, I think. It don't belong to herself, I suppose, for there's real gold round it. Has she run away from somewhere with these things? She might have been a lady's maid. They're often like ladies themselves, and she could have taken things from her mistress. That's a valuable article, I'm sure. I'd know the shine of the gold around it; it ain't brass anyway."

No, it was not brass certainly. The miniature was very handsome, and the face portrayed quite worthy of it, as far as beauty of feature went. It represented the half-length figure of a young man, dressed in modern fashion. A "real gentleman" he seemed, to use the expression of the old woman, who was carefully surveying the effects of the desolate stranger. Nothing else of value was in the poor bundle—no money, no trinkets. A little packet of letters was there, but the old woman did not care for them. She could scarcely read writing, and

she felt no curiosity to peep into those epistles which had once been so precious to the owner ; perhaps some of them were precious still.

“Maybe there’s more things in her pockets,” thought the inquisitive dame, as she tied up the bundle once again, and left it on the table near the lattice window. “I’ll have a look at them ;” and so she had.

Taking down the shabby black gown which had been taken off the stranger on the first evening of her arrival, she put her hand in its pocket, and discovered a purse, containing one or two shillings and some pence. In this purse was carefully folded up a scrap of paper, which the woman thought at first might be a five-pound note ; and her heart beat as she opened it—not because she had any fixed idea of taking the money, but from that strange feeling of excitement that the mere touch and look of money gives to most people in greater or less degree. A rich man’s eyes will sparkle at the thoughts of

millions—a less rich man at the mention of thousands—and so on. The aged and withered creature, who did not possess a shilling in the whole world that day, trembled as she opened out the bit of paper that might have represented untold wealth to her—so much wealth as, in all possibility, she had never been mistress of in her life. But the scrap of paper, though folded with much care, was not a five-pound note; it was merely a jagged piece of a letter, and these words were written on it in a lady's handwriting—

“If you come to Norham in December, as we hope you will, I should like you to stay as long as possible.”

And the rest was too much torn to be intelligible.

Ah! when the person who wrote those few lines laid down the pen that traced them, and sealed the letter that contained them, she did not know what they would yet bring forth to

her of shame and grief and despair! Written as they were, in the fulness of an affectionate heart, she dreamed not of the dark future that was coming to her all through them. You will pity her, reader, when you know more about the matter, as you will bye-and-bye, if you have patience to read further; for already she is not a stranger to you.

The old woman folded up the scrap of paper again, without reading it; and sighed as she put it back in the purse, from which she took the shillings and pence, and held them longingly in her hand—longingly as any one, perhaps, might have done who had scarcely enough of money in her possession to purchase an ounce of tea or a loaf of bread. Should she take one solitary shilling—one solitary penny? The shilling would surely be missed—there were but two; but the pence were numerous enough. That old—old woman, grim and gray, ragged and poverty stricken, looked long and earnestly at the money. It was a painful picture.

“Ah! God help her!—I’ll not take one,” she said, with another deep sigh, as the struggle between wrong and right was over in her mind. “God help her and me. It’s seldom I ever stole money, though I may have taken a bit to eat now and again, when I felt starving. No! I won’t take a copper, even to buy a cup of tea.”

The purse—with its shillings and its pence, and its scrap of paper which was to work so much ill to one innocent person—was replaced in the stranger’s pocket; and in the swiftly-coming darkness of night the aged watcher took up her place once more beside the bed of the poor wanderer.

CHAPTER XII.

LUCY BARR AND CORPORAL HAMMERSLY.

IN the dusk of the evening a trim little maiden, with a basket on her arm, went forth from Abraham Barr's house, taking her way in the direction of Evergreen Villa.

"Don't be long, now, Lucy," said Mrs. Barr, looking out of the door after her. "Don't be a minute longer than you need. I'm often uneasy at the way you stay when you go out at this hour, and I'm sure Miss Bouverie won't delay you."

"Though it's dark, mother, it isn't late," replied Lucy, eagerly. "There's no fear of anything at this hour."

"Don't be a minute longer than you need," repeated the mother, and with a gentle little sigh the girl said, "No mother," in a low voice, and went her way.

About the same hour of that same evening Corporal Hammersly, of her Majesty's 17th Lancers, happened to emerge from the great gate of the Cavalry Barracks at Norham, and to walk also in the direction of Evergreen, where, overtaking Miss Lucy Barr on the said road, he bade her good evening, and slackened his pace to walk beside her.

"Good evening," said Lucy, timidly, as she moved her basket from one arm to the other; and then there was a pause before she resumed—"My mother said I was not to stay out long, and I should like to hurry to Evergreen."

"You stay a great deal at home, I think?" said the corporal.

"I am at needlework all day nearly, and then I have only time to go out in the evening," she replied.

"A hard life enough," thought the young soldier.

"And I'm afraid," continued the girl, blushing, though the change of colour was not visible in the dusky light, "that mother would not like me to talk to anyone on the way when I am out."

"You mean that she would object to your talking to me?"

"Not only to you, but to anyone who was not speaking on business," said Lucy, trying to be as polite as was possible under the circumstances.

"I know it does not appear as if I was fit to keep company with such as you, Miss Barr," said Hammersly, in a sorrowful tone; "but it is not altogether my own fault that I am not in a more respectable class of life. If I ran away and enlisted because I was miserable at home, it was not because I was idle,

or a scapegrace who would not try to get on in the world some other way. My family were always respectable, and, only my father lost his money through misfortunes, I would not have been driven to seek my fortune as a mere soldier."

"Then you ran away from home?" said Lucy, hoping to discover that her companion was somebody of consequence in disguise. His voice was certainly unlike the voices of other men in his rank; his air was like that of a gentleman—and was he not the handsomest of human beings? Poor Lucy thought he was; and, indeed, you could scarcely have seen a better-looking youth in any class of life.

"Yes; I ran away from home, and it was the best thing I could have done. Had I stayed there I should have been tempted to do what I might have been sorry for all my life."

"And your mother and father—what did they think of your running away?"

"They never knew it; they died years ago, and my sister and I were left to the charity of the worst of beings."

"Who was he?"

"My uncle, James Hammersly, a brother of my father, who lent him money that he never paid back, and then promised my father, when he was dying, to take care of his children."

"And he treated you badly?"

"Do not speak of him," said the young man, grasping his cane tightly; "do not speak of him. I could not dare to tell what I endured under his roof."

"And is your sister living with him now?"

"No; my sister was obliged to go and earn her bread before I ran away to enlist. She went to London about two years ago, and I soon afterwards left my uncle's house, and was glad to become what I am—a trooper in the 17th Lancers."

"And if you had stayed on with your

uncle, what would you have become?" asked Lucy.

"A wretched farm hack—a ploughman—perhaps a common labourer in the fields. All the education my parents strove to give me was thrown away as long as I lived with my uncle at the Priory Farm."

"But are you better off now than you were then?" asked Lucy, in a hesitating tone.

"Of course I am. I am no longer a slave, working without reward and treated as a menial. As long as I do my duty as a soldier no one can interfere with me, and the work is not hard."

"But there's the fighting and the battle-fields," said Lucy, after a pause; "and some people don't think it is right to kill people."

Corporal Hammersly smiled.

"Men must fight for their Queen and country, and die for them if need be. It is only the Quakers who object to soldiers fighting."

"My mother objects to it," said Lucy, quickly. "She is nearly a Quaker in that."

"Then she makes a mistake, Miss Barr. And if the Russians were over here invading us, or any other enemy, she would be very glad, no doubt, to have the garrison at Norham to protect her."

"Perhaps she might," said Lucy, who probably thought that she, at all events, should not object to such protection; "but she does not like the army, at all events, now."

"When there is no danger of an enemy coming," added Hammersly, good humouredly.

"And are you never sorry for enlisting?" asked Miss Barr.

"Very seldom, if ever," replied the youth, after a few minutes of reflection. "Since I came to Norham, in particular, I am glad I entered the army."

Again the young girl wasted a beautiful blush on the dusky evening, as she observed,

"Well, I don't think Norham is a very nice place; but I suppose I am tired of it."

"It is not altogether the place itself," said Hammersly, "but the people—that is, one person."

Lucy walked on pretty quickly, and changed her basket from one arm to the other, by which movement it came back to the arm on which it hung when she first left her father's door that evening.

"Whereabouts is your uncle's farm?" she asked, after being silent for some time.

"In Shropshire. It is a very large farm, and unless my uncle has a son, I must inherit the property, for it is entailed, and cannot be sold, or given away to a stranger."

"Is it?" asked Lucy, who did not understand much what "entailed" meant, but supposed it was something likely to be of use to Hammersly after his uncle's death.

"And your uncle has no son?"

"No; he never married, and it is not likely that he will, as he is past sixty now."

Lucy thought it was not at all likely. Had she lived longer in the world she might not have been quite so sure on that point.

"And if it happened that you got the place, I suppose you would leave the army," she said.

"Yes, if I could purchase my discharge. So if you would allow me to speak a few words to your father or mother, I—"

"Oh, never! never!" replied the girl, emphatically. "It would be of no use in the world. I tell you mother dislikes the army, and I know she would tell me not to speak to anyone in it, if she knew that I did so."

"Then she does not suspect anything at present?"

"I have not told her that you ever spoke to me," returned Lucy, a little proudly; "but I begin to think of giving up an acquaintance that she would not approve of. In fact, I must do it, for she would think me the most artful and unkind daughter in the world if I did not."

"Of course, if you wish to give me up, it is not for me to object," said the corporal, in a rather offended tone. "I should, indeed, be sorry to force you to do anything against your will."

"You could not expect me to disregard my father's and mother's wishes?" returned the girl.

"In such a matter as this some people would think they had no right to interfere," said Hammersly, who in his heart thought by no means the less of Lucy for the words she uttered, though they cast him down.

"That would not be my way," she returned; "I could not be happy if I thought my father or mother were vexed with me; and, let it cost me what it may, I must not do anything to displease them."

Hammersly drew a long breath, and there was a short time of silence.

"Tell me about your sister," said Lucy, speaking again first. "Is she handsome?"

"Yes, very."

"Like you?" and then the girl blushed at her inadvertent question, which was uttered naively.

"People say we are like, but she is far better-looking than I am. She is a great beauty."

What young girl evers hears of "a great beauty" without being interested and filled with curiosity?

"Is she tall?"

"Yes, too tall, perhaps," said the corporal, who stood six feet three in his military boots, as he glanced at the little figure beside him.

"And graceful, with beautiful features?"

"Yes, so people say."

"What colour are her eyes and hair?"

"Dark like my own, I believe."

"I should like to see her," said Lucy, already falling into admiration of Hammersly's sister. "I suppose she is the only relation you have to care for you?"

"The only one, indeed; yet we have not seen each other for more than two years. I

have been out of England till quite lately since I enlisted, and Rachel has left the place she went first to in London from the Priory."

"But you write often to each other, of course."

"Well, no; I am not very expert at letters, and my sister seems growing tired of writing to me, though, 'till about a year ago, she wrote pretty often. When people separate like us, it is hard to meet again, Miss Barr; but I must go and search for Rachel sometime when I get a month's furlough. She looks down on me now, I am afraid, for she was better educated than I was, and able to take a situation as governess; as though our uncle treated her harshly enough, he educated her that she might go and earn her bread away from him, while he wanted to make a farm servant of me."

"Cruel man!" said Lucy. "But your sister would not forget or look down on you, I am sure."

"I don't know; she used to be very affec-

tionate even after I enlisted, but not latterly. People grow grand after a time, as they prosper. They say, you know, that hearts are hardened by riches and prosperity."

"But is your sister so well off?"

"She may be. Governesses are often well paid, and Rachel was very clever; she could paint and draw, and teach music and languages."

"I should be sorry to think that she had so little heart as to give up her only brother, if she had all the wealth in the world!" said Lucy, ardently. "Depend upon it you are mistaken about her."

"I must go and find her out," said Hammersly, who felt proud of mentioning this wonderful sister. "And perhaps, Miss Barr, the time may come when you and she—"

"Oh! here we are at Evergreen!" interrupted Lucy, as if the sight of the villa gate was enough to put an end to all conversation, and her heart fluttered as she laid her hand on the staple. "Good-bye, good-night.

Goodness gracious ! if Miss Bouverie is looking out !”

“She will only see the stars,” said the corporal, coolly, but he walked away, to a little distance.

CHAPTER XIII.

LETTER FROM RODNEY ST. GEORGE, ESQ., TO
THE HON. MRS. ST. GEORGE, GARTOQUIL,
COUNTY OF DONEGAL, IRELAND.

“MY DEAR MOTHER—

“As you seem to be anxious to hear what I think of Norham, I must give you some account of this wonderful old military station and its vicinity beyond what you can see in the Topographical Dictionary ; though indeed with one exception, which I shall

mention presently, there is nothing very remarkable in or about it. Everyone, I suppose, is aware that there is an ancient castle here, with a flag flying from its tall tower, and a handsome bridge thrown over the waters of the River Dinwell, which washes one wall of the barracks, without regard to the health of the troops therein located. So far I do not know very much of the society of the neighbourhood, but I understand there is not much of it. I have also learned that there is good fishing and shooting to be found, and capital hunting. The General is very kind, and determined evidently to take good care of me, as no doubt you recommended me to his paternal guardianship. Miss Barnard is, like most young ladies, agreeable to you when present, and forgetting no doubt all about your existence when out of sight. The civil population of the *locale* consists, among the gentry, chiefly of elderly squires, who talk of turnips and drainage; and young ones, who find no interest in anything but horses and horse-racing. The

ladies of the vicinity are very few in number. But now I approach what to me is the chief wonder of the place, of which I said I should soon speak. Few as are the members of the fair sex at Norham, it yet contains the prettiest girl I ever saw. Do not be alarmed, however, though she should be ever so ineligible a match for a poor man like myself. She is the prettiest girl, and, to judge from the expression of her face, perhaps the most amiable I ever saw ; but for all that I am in no danger whatever. Sir Ralph is determined to save me at all hazards, and he endeavours to impress upon my mind the fact that Miss Dora Bouverie will not have a dowry of sixpence, every time he sees me in her company. I expect to hear some time that he has written to you on the subject to interpose your influence for my welfare. In any case, it is by no means certain that, if my views were ever so serious, the young lady would consider me worthy of a thought. Report says she has suitors by the dozen, and both she and her

sister may have a chance at any time of going off in the matrimonial line most advantageously; for which reason *le père* Bouverie is a sort of dragon, watching his daughters, and casting direful looks at poor mortals of my stamp. He is of a good old family, but rather out at elbows, I believe, and not very pleasant in the domestic circle. Want of money certainly does not conduce much to cheerfulness of temper. I hope Captain Bouverie does not render his pretty daughters very unhappy by his ill-humour. I know he can cast glances sufficiently terrible to strike dismay into the stoutest heart. It is well to think that, even if I choose to flirt with Miss Dora Bouverie for a little bit of amusing pastime, I shall not run the risk of being asked my intentions before I know what I am about; and my conscience need not smite me either, as the fair enchantress seems anything but a simple damsel, ready to believe all the nonsense a man may talk to her. After all, these Bouveries do not seem bad sort of people—

always excepting the fierce looks of the Captain, when I am paying devoted attention to the charming Dora ; but they never entertain, and it is only at the houses of others you can hope to meet them. Perhaps this is no loss, as far as I am concerned, as in all probability *le père* would exclude me from admittance to his parties, if he gave any. There is a mother, too, I understand, who is rarely visible, and a son in some regiment, somewhere. These make up all the family, including the two daughters before mentioned. You see I am turning quite a gossip, learning all about the affairs of my neighbours. The fact is, a man must become a little of a gossip when he is boxed up in a place like this, unless he takes to hard reading, which was never my *forte* ; and so I am obliged to succumb to circumstances, and prove myself as degenerate as my fellow-mortals with shallow brains. But these Bouveries are not commonplace people. If you saw the girls you would really

say they were worth thinking about—not like the generality of country-town young ladies, giggling and pert, with no air or manners. Everyone here agrees they are perfectly well bred and very handsome. On the whole, I think I shall make myself pretty comfortable at Norham. It does not seem nearly so dull a quarter as I had expected. By-the-bye, Miss Dora Bouverie is extremely like that picture of Carlo Dolce's in the library at Killevan—her hair just that bright color, and her features even prettier.

“I enclose a sketch of the old castle which I took yesterday, while standing on the ramparts. It will give you some idea of it. I forgot to say I have become acquainted with Lord Halesby, and his son, young Lyon, and they have asked me down to Halesby some time soon. Lady Halesby rarely goes out, I believe, and is devoting herself altogether to works of charity down in her own dominions. My letter has run on to a

great length, so I must say good-bye for the present.

“Your affectionate Son,

“RODNEY ST. GEORGE.

“P.S.—The Bouveries are related to the Halesbys.”

When Mrs. St. George received her son's letter, so far from not being alarmed at anything it contained, she was very uneasy indeed; and visions of possible disaster flitted before her mind's eye with distressing clearness. Since her beloved Rodney grew up to manhood, had it not been the dearest hope of her heart that he should marry a well-dowered young woman, whose money would supply the only want he possessed? High birth and beauty would, of course, be nice acquisitions for the lady to have, besides the large fortune, but they were not indispensable. Like a great many women of long pedigrees and short purses, Mrs. St. George knew well how to appreciate wealth, acquired no matter how,

so that the way were honest. She had no contempt for the thousands of the merchant who had risen from small beginnings to the possession of untold sums. Who are they that so often prop up the falling houses of worn-out nobility and long-descended aristocrats, but the clever, clear-brained millionaires whose wealth has been won by industry and hard work? Yes, Mrs. St. George always hoped her son would be wise enough to marry a woman with such a fortune as would place him in an influential position, and enable him to settle down in ease and comfort when he should retire from the army. There were many heiresses in the middle ranks of life who would be glad to barter money for an aristocratic connection. Rodney was too handsome to fail in winning almost any woman for his bride; so thought the mother. But she was a prudent woman, and instead of writing an excited letter back to her son, filled with advice and warnings, and slights directed against Miss Dora Bouverie's name, she sent

Rodney a very pleasant epistle, expressing pleasure that he liked Norham, and hoping that he would continue to like it.

“ I think you are quite right not to think of marrying without money on either your own side or the lady’s, but I shall leave the matter to yourself ; everyone is the best judge of his or her own affairs,” wrote Mrs. St. George. “ And if you think you could not be comfortable on a small income, it would be silly to risk your happiness by an imprudent match. It has always been my wish that you should follow your own inclinations in any important step of your life, as I feel assured your own good sense will always direct you to do what is right.”

“ Thanks, my mother,” said Rodney St. George to himself, when he read that portion of the letter ; “ and I hope I may always merit your good opinion. In the present instance, as regards Miss Dora Bouverie, your mind may rest at ease. There is no danger to apprehend in that quarter.” And so, perhaps,

so that the way were honest. She had no contempt for the thousands of the merchant who had risen from small beginnings to the possession of untold sums. Who are they that so often prop up the falling houses of worn-out nobility and long-descended aristocrats, but the clever, clear-brained millionaires whose wealth has been won by industry and hard work? Yes, Mrs. St. George always hoped her son would be wise enough to marry a woman with such a fortune as would place him in an influential position, and enable him to settle down in ease and comfort when he should retire from the army. There were many heiresses in the middle ranks of life who would be glad to barter money for an aristocratic connection. Rodney was too handsome to fail in winning almost any woman for his bride; so thought the mother. But she was a prudent woman, and instead of writing an excited letter back to her son, filled with advice and warnings, and slights directed against Miss Dora Bouverie's name, she sent

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Being what is termed the housekeeper of her father's establishment, it was Miss Bouverie's part to order home meat from the butcher's for the daily consumption of the said establishment, and to sit at table and hear the said meat abused by her father whenever he happened to be in ill-humour, which, on the average, was on about five days in each week ; and to see his eyes glaring at her as he rapped an obnoxious joint with the carving knife, and declared it unfit for human food. Ellinor, at first, used to tremble at these hours of dinner, but gradually she had become resigned to listen with patience to every unjust and severe remark levelled at her, and to consider such treatment as part of the daily routine of her existence. These daily trials may be regarded as petty, and, perhaps, amusing by some who read of them ; but they, nevertheless, had the effect of robbing Ellinor Bouverie of the blooming colour of youth long before she had reached the age of twenty, and of sobering down many

of the buoyant feelings that ought to belong to the young.

It so happened that she was at the present juncture going on a purveying excursion to Norham with her sister—not a very romantic pursuit, perhaps, for a refined-looking and very pretty young lady; but pretty young ladies who have cross papas, with small incomes, and extravagant brothers who take away all the papa's spare cash, cannot afford to be very squeamish, and unfortunately woman's work is not always of the most delicate ethereal description. It may be objectionable for a lady to witness the amputation of a human leg or arm or the dissection of a human body, but she can learn to look calmly on when a butcher is ruthlessly chopping limb from limb, and head from carcase, of a sheep or ox; and she can acutely bargain about the difference between a halfpenny—perhaps a farthing—more or less, per pound of the slaughtered animal before her. Ay, reader, she can haggle with the slaughterer in

his greasy apron, in his greasy stall, with that heavy odour peculiar to shambles pervading the atmosphere round and about her; yet, instead of sneering at her or declaring her to be disgusting and "strong-minded," there are honest men with a prejudice in favour of everything they are accustomed to, who would rather prize such a young woman for her usefulness and womanly knowledge of raw joints to be cooked at large kitchen fires. They would never say her occupation was unrefined. Oh, no! quite the contrary.

But we are forgetting Mr. St. George, who now said,

"Going for a walk, I suppose?" and received Dora's low-spoken reply,

"Yes;" while she gave her sister's arm a slight pressure as a telegraphic signal that she was by no means to admit that they were going to Norham to buy a leg of mutton.

"Charming day. So warm and pleasant—cold I mean," said Mr. St. George, who soon rallied and became more coherent as he

turned and sauntered beside the young ladies as they proceeded on their way. He had met them at a few evening parties since the first time they became acquainted at Sir Ralph Barnard's house, and this was not the first time they had encountered each other while out walking.

Dora being on the outer side of the pathway, he, of course, joined her; besides he knew her better than her sister. It had not yet come to pass that he was permitted within the walls of Evergreen Villa, and it did not seem very likely that he ever should, for which reason he had begun to have a very great respect for the Bouverie mansion; in fact, to look upon it as a sort of charmed spot.

Dora felt very happy all the way to Norham, and when the party reached the town, she skilfully steered the way in a direction very different from that of the meat market, leading Ellinor along without compunction, as regarded the morrow's dinner.

As they all three proceeded, under Dora's guidance, towards a road that led from the town into the country, Mr. St George began gradually to recover his usual coolness, and to talk collectedly, bending forward occasionally to give a look of unutterable things into Dora's beautiful face. To-day she seemed more lovely than usual, with just a little shadow of pensiveness over her countenance that was very charming. Rarely had any such shadow before passed over the young girl's face. The darker gloom of ill-humour may have often clouded her brow for a few minutes at a time, but no shadow like the present, when the expression was calm and very sweet, though subdued.

Walking along the quiet road that led gradually into wilder tracts, till the pathway became almost lost in a trackless stretch of heathy moorland, our trio did not remember that the winter afternoons grew quickly dark, and that it was already nearly four o'clock.

"What a wild spot this seems to be,"

said Mr. St. George, as the light of the winter day faded suddenly, and some heavy drops of sleet fell, while a moaning wind burst over the dark moor on which the party was walking.

"It is raining," said Ellinor, with a vivid recollection of Dora and herself having on their best hats and feathers, and consequently in dismay. "It is raining, and there is no shelter near."

"Yes, there is a little cottage somewhere near this, I am sure," said Dora; "I remember seeing it long ago, and I know it must be in this direction."

Mr. St. George, in his capacity of protector and champion of his fair companions (and perhaps also with an eye to the well-being of a very new hat), looked anxiously around, but could not perceive any sign of human habitation.

"Come this way," persisted Dora, walking very fast; "the cottage must be somewhere very near," and so, hurrying on, the party went further on the moor, plunging into

thickets of furze, and pelted with rain and sleet, now falling thickly.

Dora would not give up the idea of the cottage, and led her followers on at a rapid pace, while the wind came sweeping by in frequent gusts with solemn wail, very dismal to hear. Ellinor felt quite unhappy as she thought of her hat, boots, and the likelihood of having no dinner provided for the following day; while, at length, graver fears perplexed her; for she considered it probable that the evening would close in, and night find them wandering on the moor, drenched.

“What will papa think?” was her chief thought; and then she called to Dora to return for the fifth time. Having at length tired herself thoroughly, and hurt her ankle into the bargain, Dora, quite fatigued and out of breath, submitted to her sister’s better judgment, and consented to give up the search for the visionary cottage.

“We must try and get on fast,” said Ellinor; “it will soon be quite dark.”

"Oh, I cannot walk any faster," declared, Dora, who really was exhausted.

And then, after some little hesitation, Mr. St. George offered her his arm, as some slight assistance. Taking his arm in a walk across a moor, in a snow-storm, seemed to Dora quite a different matter from taking it in a promenade through a ballroom, and she was just a little shy of accepting the proffered support, though she did not decline it.

Dreary as the walk was, as regarded wind and snow, I do not know, after all, if any of the party, except poor Ellinor, were particularly wretched. A young man of three-and-twenty, by no means averse to the society of ladies, was not likely to fret much about the inconvenience of getting wet through, as he went along with one of the prettiest girls he had ever admired, leaning on his arm, and as each gust of wind blew against them fiercely, clinging to it with a very perceptible pressure.

All Ellinor's anxiety was to get home, and

she could think of nothing but her father's anticipated surprise and anger; but Dora nearly forgot the weather and the darkness. The storm might howl, the sleet might pelt, the ground might become like a morass, and her ankle might throb and burn, but there was a something through it all that buoyed her up and made her feel as if this was the pleasantest walk she had ever taken in her whole life. Fifty balls, on fifty different nights, could not have produced such an effect as that one winter walk in the drenching rain, with a black sky overhead, and scarcely a gleam of light anywhere but in her own heart. There could be no formality here—no stereotyped phrases. It was the young man's duty to cheer his companions and make light of the disastrous change of weather, and for some time he talked pleasantly, falling only now and then into fits of musing, which were rather soothing than the reverse.

“This unhappy *contretemps* has been all my fault,” said Dora.

“Your fault, Miss Bouverie?”

“Yes; it was I who chose to come in this direction, and then I was obstinate in not turning back when my sister wished it.”

“And yet, after all, I, at least, should consider it by no means an unpleasant walk if I did not fear that you have suffered seriously.”

“But you must be quite wet,” said Dora, with real interest. “How provoking! I must blame myself heartily for such a sad result of my stupid pioneering.”

“Not sad to me, except on your account,” said the aide-de-camp in a low tone, and then there were more little speeches whenever the storm abated in its violence, all of which seemed very significant to Dora, to whom they were addressed, for Ellinor kept hurrying on always in advance, as if a moment gained or lost would materially alter the aspect of affairs at home, or make any difference in her father’s temper.

After some time longer of floundering about, and missing their way in the ever in-

creasing darkness, our trio at length reached the suburbs of the town, and from thence proceeded to Evergreen.

Ellinor was eager in her remonstrances with Mr. St. George against his accompanying her and her sister as far as their own house, declaring that they could very well find their way alone, and could not think of giving him so much trouble; but when he turned to Dora and said,

“Your sister will decide between us,” and received permission to continue his escort, poor Ellinor was defeated. Dora had never thought, perhaps, of how her father should receive herself and her sister after being out so late, long past the usual dinner hour, nor of the unpleasant questions and explanations that would ensue when they reached home.

“I shall be quite anxious, Miss Bouverie, to hear how you and your sister are after this excursion; I hope I may be permitted to call and inquire how you are,” said Mr. St. George, as they reached Evergreen.

“Thanks ; we shall be very happy if you do,” replied Dora, and it was fortunate for her sister that she did not hear those words, for Ellinor was now rapping tremulously at the hall door. Her imagination had not in the least exaggerated her father’s displeasure at the absence of her and Dora at such an hour, upon such an evening. The dinner had been late and not well cooked, and with every splash of rain and sleet that dashed against the windows, the Captain’s anger increased, as he vainly listened for sounds of his daughters’ approach. Had Mrs. Bouverie been capable of suffering acutely about anything she would have undergone a supreme martyrdom during the hours the girls were away ; but her husband’s temper had nearly paralysed her power of feeling long ago, and she sat listening in a stony sort of numbness to his outbursts of vexation.

It was a remarkable fact that Captain Bouverie understood so little of his wife’s disposition up to the present time that he

always seemed to be struck with astonishment at her calmness and indifference to his violent outbursts of anger. Nothing at times could be more irritating to him than to watch her countenance, looking as placid and unmoved when he was endeavouring to say everything that was disagreeable, and likely to exasperate her, as if he were in the best of tempers. No doubt he felt his own inferiority, when he found he could not overturn her equanimity, and this was galling to his overbearing spirit. In many ways Captain Bouverie was sorely tried of late, and he made his home miserable both to himself and his family by his frequent fits of ill-humour.

“I am surprised, very much surprised, at this strange behaviour,” he exclaimed, as his daughters appeared all wet and dripping before him. “You, in particular, Ellinor, are to blame as being older than your sister; and if you have no regard for your own character, I beg you will have some for mine.

I consider it highly derogatory to the dignity of an officer and a gentleman that my daughters should be seen running about in such weather, at all hours; and should such conduct be repeated, I shall be under the necessity of taking some decided steps to preserve my own respectability and authority."

"Your hat and cloak are destroyed," said Mrs. Bouverie, looking at her daughter's battered costume. "Your gown will never be fit to be worn again."

"Yes; that is the way my money goes; no regard for the clothes that I must pay for. Of course it is I who will go to jail when the money runs short; so tatter out your expensive clothes, and never think of the loss," said Captain Bouverie, who was growing sarcastic.

Ellinor endeavoured to explain the state of the case in a somewhat breathless manner, when Dora, coming into the room, interrupted her by declaring in a few words that it was

through her means altogether the misadventure had occurred.

"And so, for the purpose of walking out with a scapegrace young man, who is probably making fools of you both, and laughing at you for his amusement, you set your father at defiance, and remain out beyond the dinner hour," said the father bitterly.

"You had better go up stairs, and try what you can do about your hats," observed Mrs. Bouverie, who was possibly growing tired at length of so much ado about nothing; "and take off your boots for fear of catching cold."

"Yes, you had better try to keep from illness, for I assure you I have no money to fee doctors," added the father. "If any one gets sick in this house they may go to the hospital."

And with this soothing speech ringing in their ears the girls went away at length to change their wet garments in a cold bed-

room upstairs, where no such luxury as a fire ever burned in the rusty grate, even when snow lay thickly on the ground, and icicles gathered on the inside of the window panes.

It was all very comfortless and dispiriting, and Ellinor felt very unhappy. Dora was excited and full of perplexity.

“What is to be done now?” she thought, as she flung herself on a chair in the cheerless room. “If Mr. St. George comes tomorrow, as he says he will, papa will be enraged.”

She did not like to confide her uneasiness to her sister, for with all her giddy selfishness at times she was not altogether devoid of feeling. She knew Ellinor had suffered much that evening on her account, and she would not add to her anxiety by telling her that she had given Mr. St. George permission to call at Evergreen next day.

“He must not come,” she said to herself, “and he must not be offended. I know what I shall do.”

The sisters had very few secrets as yet from each other. Indeed, it may be said they had none. The time had still to come when they should be unable to fathom each other's thoughts, and perhaps that moment, when Dora said to herself 'I know what I shall do,' while Ellinor stood close beside her, helping to brush the raindrops from her dress, was the beginning of a wretched period of doubt and estrangement that was to separate the two sisters more effectually than any distance of space could have done—the beginning of a very dark time for both.

CHAPTER XIV.

DORA BOUVERIE GOES OUT BY HERSELF.

It was not surprising that Ellinor should have caught cold by her excursion on the moor; and though she could not venture to stay in her bed next morning, lest such a course should call down further angry reproofs from her father, she thought it would be imprudent to go out next day, and was therefore puzzled to know how the dinner should be provided for, when, to her surprise, Dora, who appeared quite well, though paler than usual, with no

apparent suffering from the hurt she had given her ankle the previous evening, expressed her intention of going out, adding that if there were anything to be done at Norham she would execute the commission.

"But, then, you do not like marketing," said Ellinor.

"No, indeed, I hate it; but I shall order anything you may want very badly," replied Dora, who evidently thought it was quite the right and proper duty of her elder sister to do what was disagreeable as regarded providing for the wants of the household, and that she should consider Ellinor under an obligation to her if she condescended to assist her.

"Thanks. I wish you would, for I am really afraid to go out, I have such a severe headache."

"I am sure I wonder I have not a headache too," said Dora, looking at herself in the glass. "Papa made such a dreadful piece of work last night when we came home that it was enough to make anyone ill."

"Poor papa has a great deal to try him, Dora," said Ellinor, sadly. "I am afraid there is something preying on his mind that we know nothing about."

Dora was silent as she went to search through her wardrobe for a becoming gown, not with her usual air of thoughtless gaiety, but with a sombre shadow upon her face—something anxious in the expression of her deep blue eyes, that told of a mind not altogether at ease.

She took a long while to dress, and it was nearly three o'clock before she left the house.

"He would not think of calling here before three," she said to herself, as she lingered over her toilette ; "he will probably be out about the hour we met him yesterday."

And then, with a dreamy recollection of having to order some tea, sugar, and meat at Norham, she sallied forth, feeling rather nervous and uneasy.

Although rather late in the afternoon, she did not hurry her pace ; in fact, she rather

loitered on the way, wondering, as she went along, whether all homes were as unhappy as hers was ; and if many young women of nineteen, with as fair a share of beauty as she possessed, often felt as weary and miserable as she did then.

All the time she was walking onwards she was expecting to meet Mr. St. George, coming to pay his promised visit of inquiry at Evergreen, and she determined to prevent his going on all the way ; yet she only felt more and more nervous when she really did perceive his figure on the long flat road.

“ What shall I say to him ? ” she thought, catching her breath in little gasps, and beginning to tremble painfully. “ What can I say to him ? ”

After all, the meeting was not so dreadful. Mr. St. George experienced great pleasure at seeing her able to walk, and looking so well — though, indeed, except for the transient blush that lighted up her face when he spoke to her, there was very little colour in her cheeks.

"Yes, I am very well," she replied, in a very hurried, confused way; "but my sister has caught cold, and is in her room to-day, and papa——"

What could she say about her father? Nothing; so she had to flounder, and get out of the mention of his name as she best might. What she chiefly wanted to do was to keep the aide-de-camp, at all hazards, from venturing into the lion's den.

"I am going to Norham," she said, in desperation; "and if you have nothing better to do, you might—that is, if you are not walking in any particular direction——"

Mr. St. George looked a little surprised, as she stopped here without finishing her sentence.

"I was only going to inquire for you and your sister," he said, at length; "but having met you, I intend to return to Norham."

And again he gave a glance of surprise at the face of his companion, which was changing colour perceptibly.

“Thanks,” she murmured, feeling still miserably confused. “You are very kind.” And then they both went on together; he beginning to wonder, perhaps, if he had already made such an impression on her as to set her wits astray. The vanity of woman is only to be equalled by the vanity of man. Each of these young people, without doubt, imagined that the other was deeply smitten, by his or her charms. Well, perhaps, they were not very far wrong, though neither had, as yet, acknowledged to his or her own heart how far the supposed *penchant* of the other was returned.

Meeting Lucy Barr, when they were near the town, Dora thought of asking her to execute the commissions relative to the grocer and butcher which had been confided to herself by Ellinor, and drawing out her pocket-book, she hastily wrote a few memoranda on a detached leaf, which she gave to Lucy, thus avoiding the necessity of going to the objectionable shops herself.

"Did you see that pretty face?" she said, when Lucy had gone on her way.

"Well, I did not remark anything particular," replied Mr. St. George. "I am afraid I can only entertain one idea at a time, and having at present one style of beauty vividly impressed on my mind it banishes thoughts of all others."

Again a fleeting colour of brightest pink passed over Dora's face, and a thrill of pleasure shot through her heart. Not that she was unaccustomed to flattering speeches. Ever since she grew up she knew what it was to hear her beauty praised, but never before had she listened with so much delight to any words as to these. Whether thoughts of the possible peerage which might yet fall to the lot of her companion had anything to do with this delight it is difficult to determine. We all know that a small hand encased in an exquisitely fitting glove, a tiny foot peeping from under a silk flounce, have been known to create ardent love. Why, then, should it

be thought strange if rank and wealth should touch the heart and set it beating?

Women in particular, owing to the circumstances in which they are placed, are apt to associate some advantage of position with the tenderest feelings of their souls; and so, if General Barnard's aide-de-camp derived importance in Dora's estimation from his relationship to Lord Killeevan, there is nothing in it to astonish anybody.

As she went along by his side she found herself wondering how many cousins might stand between him and the title. The old Peerage at home could not tell that. How could any one know how many deaths had occurred in the St. George family during the last sixteen years. It was too bad to be so poor that a new Peerage could not be procured to enlighten her with respect to the present generation of titled individuals and their relatives.

Upon getting near the town Dora said she was going to visit a poor person to whom her

sister was often kind. It is needless, perhaps, to say that the idea of going to see this individual only struck her when she was considering what on earth she would say to Mr. St. George was the object of her solitary walk that afternoon.

“I do not like going through the busy part of the town,” she said, leading the way to a quiet back street; “there are always so many idle people lounging about the frequented thoroughfares.”

There were not many persons as yet at Norham who knew the appearance of Mr. St. George in plain clothes, and Dora hoped that he might not attract much notice. She was not like some young ladies whose number of beaux are limited, and who are proud to parade any stray few that fall to their lot, wherever they may be best seen; and, therefore, she took her companion through the most deserted portions of the quaint old town, where the streets were narrow and tortuous, and the inhabitants of the poorest classes.

“Do you often go out upon these missions of charity, Miss Bouverie?” asked the aide-de-camp.

“Oh, no—that is, sometimes ; but I am not nearly so good as my sister ; she goes out a great deal among the poor. I am afraid you find this sort of thing rather uninteresting, but I shall not keep you long.”

“Believe me when I say that I could not consider any pursuit uninteresting in such company.”

“You flatter too much ; but I am afraid you think you could not say less.”

Dora now found herself rather puzzled to discover the abode of the old woman to whom Ellinor now and then brought little charitable gifts, but who was seldom much in her sister’s thoughts when she accompanied her in her visits.

“I am really so stupid,” she said, feeling very awkward. “Surely the house is somewhere in this street. Dobbs is the woman’s name—yes, Janet Dobbs, an old woman with

a blind eye. There now, you are smiling. You must think this is so ridiculous!"

The thoughts of the old woman with the blind eye did make Mr. St. George inclined to laugh, but he assured his companion that he was quite serious, and full of anxiety to discover the residence of Mrs. Janet Dobbs.

"I shall go over to that shop next the corn stores, and ask where the old creature lives," declared Dora, crossing the narrow street, to make inquiries on the opposite side.

She had scarcely done so, when two men emerged from the cornyard by which she and Mr. St. George were passing, and, to her infinite dismay, one of them proved to be Mr. Clarke, the barrackmaster.

Without being able exactly to define the feeling, or account for its existence, Dora felt that she would rather have met anyone—except, perhaps, her father—than Mr. Clarke at that moment.

A deep colour flushed up over her whole face as he stopped to speak to her, and fixed

his eyes of uncertain expression on her countenance—those eyes which so seldom met the gaze of other eyes, but which were at liberty to scan Miss Dora Bouverie's face just now in peace, as she did not dare to meet his earnest and inquiring look.

“How very intimate she must be already with this young man,” he thought, “to walk along with him in such a part of the town.” And the thought made him grow pale.

Mr. St. George had walked on a little in advance, to permit Miss Bouverie to talk to this other acquaintance, and now stood aloof tracing imaginary figures with his walking-stick on the ground. Very elegant he looked, and in all her confusion Dora thought so, contrasting his figure with that of the barrack-master, to the infinite disadvantage of the latter.

Young girls very often take very unreasonable antipathies, and it is scarcely too much to say that Dora Bouverie felt, just now, as if she abhorred Mr. Clarke.

"The last place I could have hoped to meet you, Miss Bouverie," he said, smiling curiously.

"Indeed! Why? My sister is often here visiting poor people, and why should not I?"

"Oh! on a mission of mercy, and initiating Sir Ralph Barnard's aide-de-camp into the mysteries of district visiting, and the conversion of the heathen of the slums by the aid of soup and coals."

"I met Mr. St. George on the way, and he was kind enough to accompany me thus far," said Dora, coldly.

"Well, I should say the kindness was all on your side in permitting him to have the pleasure of your company. A man who is idle all day may well find even a home mission delightful in such society. Not afraid of small-pox or typhus, I suppose? I believe there are a few cases about here at present."

"Sorry to hear it, Mr. Clarke; good morning," said Dora, taking no pains to conceal

her opinion of the unhappy barrack-master, even to the verge of rudeness.

He touched his hat, smiled, showed his white teeth, which aggravated Dora so much that she only gave him the least little nod in the world, and turned off to pursue her search for Mrs. Dobbs' house, which seemed likely to prove as unsuccessful as the search of the previous day for the imaginary cottage on the moor. After some further explorations, Dora thought she would give it up and go home. She was very tired and in bad spirits. All at once an indescribable gloom seemed to steal over her heart.

"You are fatigued, I fear," said Mr. St. George, looking with real concern at her pale face.

"Only a very little," she replied, in a dejected tone; adding, after a few minutes' pause, "Do you believe in presentiments, Mr. St. George?"

He smiled, and shook his head.

"I cannot speak from experience, never having had any presentiments of good or evil that I remember. Whatever has happened to me of weal or woe was generally most unexpected. Indeed, I should say, whenever I have felt particularly low-spirited, something nearly always turned up rather pleasant, which would lead me to conclude that dark presentiments were either not to be trusted, or regarded in a contrary light. Has an unpleasant presentiment crept over you now?"

"Now and then I feel so strangely when I see or speak to certain people, that I can hardly help fancying there may be something like a presentiment in it."

"And having just seen and spoken to that fascinating Mr. Clarke, I presume he is connected with a presentiment in the present instance," observed the aide-de-camp, lightly.

"I don't like him," said Dora, frankly; "but perhaps he does not strike other people as being so disagreeable as he does me."

"Which is rather ungrateful, for he is evidently an admirer."

"Oh! that is the reason I dislike him so," exclaimed Dora, naively. "I hate people that admire me when I cannot return the compliment." And then she coloured a little at her own earnestness; for Mr. St. George had given her what seemed a searching look from the depths of his dark eyes.

"And now you are not to come any farther with me," she said, as they reached the confines of the town. "I have tired you enough, and I will go home alone."

He remonstrated, but she was very firm, and he saw that she was in earnest. However, he did not feel offended. Perhaps a suspicion of the truth dawned upon his mind, as he observed how eagerly she wished to prevent his escorting her to Evergreen. They parted very amicably, and both went on their own way. He to his quarters to while away some hours before it should be time to dress for dinner at the General's; she to a home she

felt to be a dreary one, though she was not without affection for her parents and her sister.

Dora was still thinking, in spite of herself, of Mr. Clarke, and her dislike of him, when she reached the gate of Evergreen, and even while she walked slowly up the avenue to the house. The hall-door was open, and as she entered the hall she heard her father speaking, and these words fell upon her ear,

“ So Miss Dora has not come back yet, and Clarke has just told me that he met her and St. George, walking together in Slippery Court. Very nice, after what I said last night !”

Having overheard these terrible words, Dora Bouverie's first impulse was to rush into the dining-room, where she knew her father was, and denounce Mr. Clarke as a spy of the meanest, most abhorrent description; but second thoughts prompted her to take what was, no doubt, a more prudent course, and she went quietly upstairs, still feeling very much enraged against the unfortunate bar-

rack-master for having told her father anything at all of her movements that afternoon.

“He knew papa would disapprove of my being with Mr. St. George,” she thought, “and he told him just to make mischief, the mean, meddling, mean-spirited, detestable man!”

Filled with the bitterest feelings of anger, the young lady went into her own room, which was fortunately unoccupied, as Ellinor had been obliged to go down and see about dinner, in spite of a most torturing headache, her father being too much of an epicure, and too long accustomed to the luxuries of a mess-table, to be expected to submit patiently to such cookery as Patty, the servant, could provide for him. People must pay good wages if they want to have good cooks, and as Captain Bouverie disliked paying anything he could help, his wife thought it prudent to get as cheap a handmaid for her ménage as possible—one whose ignorance might keep her humble, and who was contented to do

everything about the household in a sort of make-believe fashion, because she was able to do nothing right. Ellinor, with her grievous headache, that made the sight of the contents of the larder, and the heat of the kitchen fire quite unbearable, had to stay and watch Patty getting ready delicate little fancy dishes, suitable for a fastidious palate, and the womanly work was not so very easy after all—not half as easy as a good deal of manly work, which is much more profitable to the worker.

Thus her sister being down-stairs superintending the quantity of pepper and salt to be put into this gravy or that soup (Patty never could be made to comprehend the nice distinction between too much and too little of such seasoning), Dora Bouverie found herself alone in her chamber, and, shutting the door firmly, and perhaps not very gently, she began to walk up and down through it without pausing even to look at herself in the glass, which was contrary to her usual custom

on entering her room after being out. Perhaps she was not very far wrong in supposing that Mr. Clarke had informed her father of his having met her with Mr. St. George that day for the purpose of exciting the anger of Captain Bouverie. The barrack-master was quite capable of such littleness, and he was particularly anxious to stop any flirtation that might be carried on between the handsome aide-de-camp and Miss Dora Bouverie. Within the last week or two he had begun to entertain hopes connected with that young lady, which were very much strengthened by her father's manner to him of late; but, apart from this interest in her, Mr. Clarke was capable of doing and saying many things out of spite, and for the sole purpose of making mischief. Dora's antipathy to the barrack-master increased tenfold the more she thought of the trouble and perplexity his officious gossiping might cause her; but she determined to brave the matter out, and go down to dinner as usual, and meet her father at once.

As soon as she made her appearance in the dining-room, Captain Bouverie demanded an explanation of her conduct that day.

“My friend Clarke very kindly informed me of seeing you, and that—that person whom I particularly forbade you to be on terms of intimacy with, walking in a most disreputable part of the town this afternoon. What can excuse such disobedience and disrespect to me?”

“I did not mean to be disrespectful, papa. When I met Mr. St. George I was obliged to speak to him, and when he walked with me I could not help it,” said Dora, trying to speak as calmly as she could.

“Yes, you could have helped it; you could have made some excuse for getting rid of him; young ladies know how to make up such excuses very easily. God knows you are all full of duplicity enough for anything! But, if you have any regard for your own respectability, you will give up walking about with scamps, who may be the means of

preventing your becoming settled in life. I can assure you, Dora, such behaviour as yours to-day has very nearly done you an irreparable injury in the eyes of a most worthy person."

"Whose eyes?" asked Dora, with a curl of her lip that she could not control.

"Those of my good friend, Clarke—a man for whom I have the greatest respect—a man who has stood my friend when I might have looked in vain for help from any one else; one of the most disinterested and generous of human beings!"

"I wish I could believe he was such a person, papa," said Dora, "but I cannot. He seems to me the most detestable of mortals!"

Captain Bouverie stared at his daughter as she made this astounding speech, but though he tried to look her fixedly in the face, he felt a very unpleasant sinking at his heart.

"Perhaps when you know what I owe—

what we all owe to that man, you will learn to regard him with greater deference, Dora," he said, significantly.

"I do not believe that he could do any person a kindness without some hidden motive of selfishness," returned Dora, positively.

"And if your opinion is correct, so much the worse for us," said the father, bitterly; "a man who acts with a semblance of kindness, through selfishness, will naturally be quick to resent any contempt or ingratitude towards him. Have a care, Dora, how you offend Mr. Clarke; I warn you of that. You know, I presume, that this house is mine, the food you eat is mine, the clothes on your back are paid for by my money. Without me what would you all be? At my death the greater part of the income that supports my family will die with me. God knows what may be left for you to subsist on then; so you had better begin to think of your position with proper humility."

During this affectionate speech of her father, Dora's countenance changed to a still paler hue than before, and her blue eyes seemed to deepen in colour almost to black, so darkly did they shine out from her white face. Her pride was touched by her father's words, and she grasped the back of the chair by which she was standing with a convulsive tightening of her small hands, as she said—

“I know, papa, I am dependent; that I have not a farthing in the world to call my own; that my position is very little, if at all, better than that of Patty, the servant in the kitchen; but, for all that, I will never cringe to anybody, nor will I pretend to believe that a man is good if I think him bad, because I am under an obligation to him. Nothing in the world will ever make me regard Mr. Clarke as an agreeable or a kind individual.”

How much Ellinor would have given to be able to induce Dora to cease uttering any

more imprudent remarks! But nothing could stop her sister from saying whatever came uppermost to her mind, when she was roused in temper.

Whatever people may have written or thought respecting the natural dependence of the female nature, it is a fact that women are just as little disposed to relish dependence as men are; and, though obliged so often to submit to the most galling slavery, it does not follow that they like it, or that they do not feel their shackled position very bitterly. The very fashion that men adopt to win women's favour during the days of courtship proves that they cannot really believe women like to hold an inferior position. Why is it that a man will cringe and flatter, and put himself, as it were, under the feet of the woman he loves, before marriage, if he thinks that it is her nature to like to be in servitude or subjection? Is she won by being informed of the humble state she will in future be re-

duced to as his wife? Does the ardent lover ever try to recommend his suit to his sweetheart by such speeches as the following:—
“Dearest Jane,—You will have everything your sweet, womanly, trusting nature could wish for—perfect helplessness and dependence on me. You will have no money of your own. I shall rule the household, and pay the tradesmen’s bills, and frown over milliners’ accounts. Do not fear that you will be permitted any freedom of will; your sweet, feminine love of submission will be amply gratified by my manly determination to carry out the full authority which the law, with such consideration for us both, allows to a husband. Henceforth you will be a most charming nullity, and on an equality with lunatics, as far as the management of money matters in law are concerned.” Ah! no, reader; the unmarried woman hears very different words from her suitors; she is to be the arbitress of her lover’s fate—queen

of his soul, star of his existence, everything high, and mighty, and great in power ; anything but the poor drudge she so often becomes afterwards. Half the women who marry, know no more of the laws of their country respecting the estate of matrimony than they know about the inhabitants of the moon. They are brought up in ignorance of what so materially concerns them, and married in ignorance of what is to be their future position. Were they better informed upon these points, perhaps very few of the wise among them would like to enter the bonds of matrimony. The bitter knowledge comes often too late, when the victim is in chains of iron, and then God help her ! It would require a man to be of the most generous disposition not to become spoiled by the power given him by the law as a husband ; while, on the other hand, in the preposterous roundabout manner of settling money on a wife, now supposed proper, it might be

imagined that the lawyers considered a husband was necessarily his wife's natural enemy — so contradictory are the present laws on the subject of man and wife.

CHAPTER XV.

A DOMESTIC SCENE.

It may be imagined that the dinner that evening at Evergreen was a most disagreeable ordeal for Ellinor and her mother. Dora was still too much under the influence of excited feelings to suffer as much uneasiness and anxiety as they did; but Ellinor had to endure a perfect martyrdom as she sat at the table, sipping water from the glass beside her, and trying to make a feint of eating. I am sure, without exaggeration, that she would have

preferred any amount of hard work to that misery of sitting opposite to her father, watching his countenance, as he scanned the dishes on the table, and expecting an explosion of temper every instant. Well might she sip water, and try to cool her fevered throat! The hand that raised the glass to her lips was hot and trembling, and her heart palpitated with a sensation nearly akin to pain. This was the sort of wretchedness that was gradually undermining her health, and robbing her cheeks of the bloom of youth, and her spirits of their natural elasticity. What Mrs. Bouverie's feelings were, Heaven alone could tell. It was to save her from trouble and care that Ellinor undertook to do the duties of the housekeeping; but the occasional sighs she uttered, half stifled though they were, plainly told that her mind was very far from being at ease.

"I suppose, Ellinor, you think, now that my circumstances are getting low, that I should submit to any kind of food," said

Captain Bouverie, as he held the carving knife suspended over a large piece of meat at the head of the table. "From the look of this dish I know it is unfit for a gentleman's table. In future, may I beg that we have no more of such disgusting joints?"

"I daresay it is not so bad, if you would only try some of it," Mrs. Bouverie ventured to say very meekly.

"Am I to be permitted to use my own judgment in the consideration of any matter?" demanded her husband, with an air of much dignity, and as if he were in the habit of being extremely ill-used. His wife's mild defence of the objectionable *roti* had sealed its fate. Sinking back in his chair, like one overwhelmed with the miseries of his life, Captain Bouverie motioned to Patty (who usually made her appearance in the dining-room, after a hurried and violent ablution of hands and face, for the purpose of attending table), to remove the head dish.

"Let us never again see that piece of meat,"

he said, with eyes flashing in the direction of Ellinor, who experienced a cold shiver as the words fell on her ears. "Let it never come to the table again in any form."

Patty was obliged to obey, and bore away the obnoxious dish, pitying the three ladies who were sitting at the table, and thinking very severe things of the master—and, indeed, if the truth must be told, of men in general; for poor ignorant Patty was not at all more reasonable than those gentlemen who imagine when one woman of their acquaintance acts a disagreeable or ridiculous part, that she is a type of her sex. In the present instance Captain Bouverie was Polly's representative man; and, as she bore away the heavy dish with stout arms down the kitchen stairs, fervent was the mental vow made in the depths of her heart that she would see "all the men in the world at Jericho before she would marry one of them!"

Well, she was not any more one-sided in her views than the fiery poet who sits down—

when jilted by some girl of seventeen, who prefers a richer, and, mayhap, more prosy individual than himself, for her husband—and pours forth a desperate tirade in verse against the whole female sex, beginning with “Woman, who can trust thee?” or some profound question, never intended to receive an answer.

And so, in this free country of England, three grown-up women sat, scarcely daring to breathe—much less speak or eat—in the presence of the personage on whom they were dependent for everything they possessed in the world—women who were in the full possession of their intellect and senses, but who were yet obliged, through custom and prejudice, not to use harsher terms, to drag out a wretched existence, without the means of bettering their condition. Of course, they might descend from their social rank, and become milliners and schoolmistresses; but, in spite of what well-meaning people have said respecting the fitness of such employ-

ments for educated women as those of hospital nurses, printers, telegraph clerks, wood engravers, &c., I do not consider that a lady of talent, who wished to earn a livelihood, would derive much distinction or profit from engaging in any of those very respectable callings, appropriate as they may be for certain classes of a lower degree. An educated woman, brought up in the rank of a gentlewoman, might naturally wish for some employment that would keep her in her own position, and not grant her merely a resource and a refuge from the workhouse. Has anybody ever thought of what rank a trained hospital nurse would hold in society, and what would be the order of precedence granted to the distinguished body of trained nurses who are to come forth from the homes of British gentlefolk? Of all the nice little unpretending occupations supposed to be suitable for the women of England, I am afraid none are very likely to meet with the approbation of such gentlewomen as have any respect for

social position. The lower and middle ranks of women have already some occupation befitting their different stations in life, and why not the women of the upper class?

When the head dish was conveyed from the table, containing about fourteen pounds of meat, which was ordered never to appear again in sight of Captain Bouverie, who, at the same time, owed a very large bill to the butcher who provided the said meat, there was a dead silence round the board for several minutes, during which Ellinor was thinking in dismay of the loss it would be to let so large a joint go to waste, and of what could be possibly be done with it to prevent such a catastrophe, without disobeying her father's commands. At length the head of the house requested to be brought some bread and cheese, and having got it, commenced to eat with great pretence of frugality for a few minutes, when, seeing that nobody was inclined to make any remark upon his behaviour, he got irritated, and declaring he would

not submit to be starved, rang the bell violently for Patty, who was forthwith despatched for another supply of meat to Norham, it being now about seven o'clock p.m. None of the little fancy dishes prepared by Ellinor with such pains, were of any avail in softening her father's wrath. He was labouring under that state of mind known in Ireland as "contrariness," and nothing could please him. Ellinor had often before endured nearly as much unhappiness on similar occasions, but she had the additional uneasiness that evening of observing that her sister scarcely seemed like her usual self. Although in general addicted to a careless, light way of talking that might seem to bespeak a shallow understanding, Dora Bouverie was in reality by no means devoid of brains. Ellinor knew that her sister could be very determined when she chose, and she felt anxious lest she might be induced to do something rash and imprudent if particularly hurt by any severity of her father.

"Do you think, Ellinor, this state of misery will last for ever?" asked Dora, seriously, as they were alone in their room. "I am getting very tired of our life here. Sometimes I really believe I should be glad to exchange my position with that of the most humble person who is earning a livelihood in peace and independence."

"All people have their trials," returned Ellinor, after a pause. "Perhaps in any position we should have to experience care and anxiety. When I feel perturbed and full of trouble, I only think the more of that indescribable peace that passes human understanding, which we read of as the reward of the just in another world."

"But it is a dreary idea, at eighteen or twenty, to think of how many long years one may have to live in this world without, perhaps, being any better off than we are now. Papa seems to think if he were taken from us we should be nearly reduced to beggary, and that is not a very pleasant prospect.

How I wish I could earn my bread without falling from my position as a gentlewoman ! But I suppose I must make up my mind to marry somebody—that is all. You may be sure, Ellinor, if I am obliged to marry merely for a provision, and a refuge from starvation, I shall make the best bargain I can. As to my becoming a very affectionate wife, I fear that will not be possible under the circumstances. People cannot be remarkably loving when they are obliged to think chiefly of their own welfare, and of escape from domestic wretchedness at home, as a reason for marrying.”

“But it would be very shortsighted to rush into matrimony for any such reasons,” said Ellinor, gravely. “A husband may sometimes be less kind than even a harsh father.”

“Oh ! but you mind a father’s unkindness more than you would a husband’s. You cannot help caring what your father thinks, and feeling affection for him ; but I think it

would not be the same with a husband. You need not love him at all."

"And what sort of life could any woman expect to lead with such a husband as that?"

"A wretched one, of course; but she would be provided for, and in no danger of starvation."

Ellinor shook her head.

"I am sure you are only jesting, Dora; yet it is a serious subject enough," she said.

"I am not jesting, I assure you—quite the contrary. I am thinking of what a miserable thing it is to be obliged to marry merely for a support and some advancement in the world, and of how a woman could revenge herself on some unfortunate man for the sins of his sex. Do you not think it possible for a wife to torment her husband instead of permitting him to torment her?"

"How can you think of such unpleasant things?" asked Ellinor, looking at Dora's flushed face in some anxiety.

In truth, Dora was not jesting, as she spoke so bitterly. Some dread of what was coming in the future may have been over her—some suspicion of a dark fate haunting her mind. Her father's words, his looks, joined to various surmises of her own, filled her with a shadowy, but still horrible fear.

"I do think this life is a mere probation, a rugged path to another happier state," said Ellinor, earnestly, as she clasped her slight hands together, interlacing her fingers in a way peculiar to her when suffering nervously. "I know our position is not a happy one; but do we not hear of misery everywhere—among the rich and poor, among men and women. There is no real happiness except for the Christian."

Dora looked for a minute or two at her sister's face without speaking, and then, as she laid her hand softly on her shoulder, she said—

"Ellinor, God has given you much grace; you are far better than most people. If ever

I were tempted to do anything very bad, I think the thought of you would keep me from it."

And then she pressed her lips to her sister's pale forehead with fervent affection.

At that moment the door opened, and Patty, just come from Norham with a fresh relay of meat for her master's dinner, hurried in breathlessly to give Miss Bouverie a note that had arrived from Lady Halesby, containing these words:—

"MY DEAR ELLINOR,

"I should be very glad if you could come down to us for a little time next week, as I think you would be able to assist me about some matters relating to my poor *protégés*. A very melancholy case of a young woman who was obliged to remain at one of the gate lodges for some days through some extreme illness brought on by destitution, has interested me greatly of late. She is a stranger, and of very respectable appear-

ance; but I fear her story is a sad one. I should like you to see her, and advise me what to do about her. My own health is much as usual; indeed, you know it is never very strong; but I hope by and bye you will all come down to Halesby, when Dawson is with you, and we shall have some little gaiety to enliven this lonely place.

“Trusting I may see you soon,

“Believe me,

“Yours very sincerely,

“MARGARET HALESBY.

“Halesby Park, Thursday.”

Dora, who was watching her sister's face as she read that note, observed the colour faintly rising to Ellinor's pale cheek as she came to the end of it, and handed it to her without making any remark.

It was very late in the evening and quite dark, and the note was read by the light of a small wax taper, which seemed to cast a weird, sepulchral light over the little chamber.

CHAPTER XVI.

WOMAN'S HEMISPHERE.

LUCY BARR found it the most difficult matter in the world to give up her lover, and the next most difficult matter to inform her mother of his existence. Every day she made a determination to see Hammersly no more, and every day she broke it. Indeed, unless she made up her mind to remain altogether within doors, she could scarcely help meeting him somewhere, as he seemed to find out by intuition wherever she might direct her

steps to; and then it was the old story over again—walking together, talking over various plans, and love making on the part of the young soldier. Lucy often wondered when she thought of how much happier than now she was in the days before Hammersly came to Norham; how unruffled her mind used to be then, with nothing more serious to annoy her than an extra supply of needlework, or her mother's objection to her trying her hand at cabinet-making.

“Home doesn't seem the same as it was long ago,” she thought, with a sigh; and she looked sorrowfully at her little sister Linny, who seemed so joyous and free of care, as her memory went back to days when she herself was a little creature as merry and light-hearted. “People ought to be good to children, especially to little girls, for it isn't long that they can expect to be very happy,” she thought, sadly.

If Hammersly would agree to give her up, and she could dismiss him for ever, all

might be well; but then came the unpleasant idea that her lover might possibly forget her, and transfer his affections to somebody else, which would be very hard for her to bear. Lucy thought she could suffer anything but that terrible contingency. It was altogether a most perplexing piece of business, and perhaps the thoughts of the farm down in Shropshire, and the position which the corporal would one day hold in the world as owner of several acres and a respectable homestead, may possibly have had a little weight in making it so difficult to give him up, but it was not an overpowering weight. She really liked Hammersly well enough to sacrifice a great deal for him, and to endure poverty and hardship if needful for his sake, and to induce her to make up her mind to become his wife even in his present position of corporal of lancers, which is saying a good deal for her unselfish affection, considering that she was a girl of sound common sense, and by no means rash or silly, or ignorant of the

disagreeable consequences of being reduced to living on small means. At home she had always been very comfortable, and her father's position as a thriving tradesman was very respectable. Lucy knew quite well how many advantages she possessed, and how much she should lose by marrying a man of Hammersly's present standing; yet if her parents would permit her she would abandon all the comforts of home, and unite her fate with that of her lover—prepared to work hard and rough through the world if necessary as his wife, though she did not like hard work, or any work, more than most people, and she had her pride of rank and position like the generality of mortals, civilised and uncivilised, of every degree. Therefore, we must be satisfied that she felt as much affection for her lover as most young women feel under similar circumstances, and if her father and mother would only consider Hammersly as worthy as she did, all would be well; but that was a very important

“if,” and not at all likely to be satisfactorily got rid of.

In the meantime, while Lucy was thus suffering such uneasiness of mind that she was beginning to grow quite thin and pale, Mrs. Barr had her anxieties also. Her elder son, Richard, still expressed a desire to enter the army when of the requisite height for peace regulations, and declined applying himself to the upholstering business in a very aggravating manner; while the frequent mistakes Lucy made in her work, such as putting rings on the bottom, instead of the top, of curtains, and sewing the trimmings on the wrong side, were very harassing. Also, Mr. Trydell's conduct caused her dissatisfaction. Let her provide the most dainty dinners in the world for him, they were still unavailing towards inducing him to consume a satisfactory amount of food, and she felt aggrieved that her efforts to please him seemed gradually losing their power. She had even tried the effect of two or three

differently coloured arm-chairs and a bright hued carpet without much success; and then she thought of raising his spirits by a little conversation, and information respecting her own peculiar perplexities, as well as some cheerful gossip about the doings in the neighbourhood. After tea, while removing the tea things, and polishing the table, was the period generally chosen by Mrs. Barr for talking to her pastor and lodger, who probably would rather have been left to his own meditations in peace and loneliness; but the good woman considered that as a hostess she had a duty to perform, and that as Mr. Trydell had no wife (a circumstance which she looked upon as extremely pitiable), it was only right that she should endeavour to make him happy, and prevent his falling into that dreadful lowness of spirits which might end no one knew how.

“Everyone have their troubles, Mr Trydell,” she said, thinking, no doubt, like most comforters, that it is a cheering thing to tell

afflicted people how much misery there is in the world, and what a number of creatures are suffering infinitely greater agonies of mind and body than those experienced by the individuals about to be consoled. "Everyone have their troubles; and though I may consider myself as one of the most fortunate of women, having a good husband, though he may be fond of amusement, and neglecting his work at times, and quarrelsome now and again with customers, and having good children, though not altogether perfection in the way of fighting with one another, and not doing as they are bade; yet still I have my troubles like others, for there's trouble in doing your duty by your family, when you have one, and in getting up every morning to do the same things over and over again, and seeing no end to it, even when things go smooth, which they don't always. I don't pretend to praise myself, sir, yet I do believe I've striven to do my duty to the best of my humble ability."

"I believe so too, Mrs. Barr," said the chaplain, with sincerity.

"Yes, sir; and I feel much obliged to you for thinking so," continued Mrs. Barr, plucking up renewed courage. "If you only knew, sir, how difficult the bringing up of a family is, on, not to say, large means—and I hope you may soon know it, for it's to be hoped you don't intend always to live in this lonely way—you wouldn't wonder that I often felt weary and downhearted."

"But you seem to have very good children, Mrs. Barr," said Mr. Trydell.

"They are as good as I could make them, sir, and I strove to make them good. As for the boys, I didn't take such pains with them as with Lucy, for it's my opinion that nature does a great deal for boys, as this world goes, and you may let them follow nature mostly, except as regards telling lies, and not learning their tasks at school. But, properly speaking, female nature has to be made by mothers; and girls must be taught how to be

womanly and natural, or they would not be womanly at all; so, of course, mothers have a hard task of it, trying to break down what is naturally unnatural in their daughters, if you can understand me, sir."

Mr. Trydell did not quite understand, but it was not of much consequence, perhaps.

"It is in the nature of girls, sir, to be born with a spirit which does not answer as regards their future destiny, and the great point in rearing them is to crush that spirit, and break it entirely. When a boy has a spirit it is all very well, and you like to see it, provided he does not make too much noise, and you haven't got rheumatism in the head; but it is awful to see the spirit of a girl, and the courageous look of her eyes, and the fun and merriment that will be in her, before she's properly tamed. There is Lucy, she was just such a little piece of drollery as Linny is now, at her age, and you see how subdued and quiet she is now. Oh! I had great work crushing her spirit, and bringing her up to be

the nice, meek girl she is now. I must begin at once to take Linny in hand, and knock the spirit out of her."

"Oh! Mrs. Barr, do not be hard upon poor little Linny," said Mr. Trydell, who had a vivid recollection of the rosy cheeks, laughing eyes, and inexhaustible spirits of his landlady's youngest child, who was often wont to come rapping with her fat hands at his door to gain admittance, and have a chat with him in her broken accents. "I do not think it is necessary to subdue the spirits of children."

"Not of boys, sir—not of boys; but girls can't be took in hand too early, otherwise how could they be made fit for their mission and their destiny? If a girl has much of a spirit after ten or eleven years of age, I wouldn't answer for the sort of young woman she might turn out; and it isn't all at once you can subdue them, Mr. Trydell. You must be on the watch constant—to frown, and scold, and find fault every five minutes, and make them think they never do anything

right, and to let them feel ashamed of themselves. There's nothing like making them shy and modest, by the dint of shaking your head and frowning, supposing even it isn't for anything in particular. Haven't you ever noticed the little girls at the parochial school? How nicely trained they are—so humble and timorous. Why, I've seen their little hands all of a tremble when they're sewing, with people looking on, and not daring to turn an eye in their head; whereas the boys, in the other department, are as bold as anything—full of the spirit that's becoming in them, and that ought to be kept up rather than put down.”

“I should be sorry to think the poor little girls were made unhappy,” said Mr. Trydell.

“Unhappy, sir! Why, if it is for our good to be made unhappy, isn't it wholesome? Don't you, as a minister of the church, and as a sensible gentleman, consider that women should be subdued, and meek, and

lowly? and there's no way to make them so but by crushing out the spirit they're born in, like sin. Every man naturally likes to have his own way; and how could he get it if women set up to have wills too?"

"Mrs. Barr, I'm afraid you think us a very selfish, cruel set of beings," said the chaplain.

"Of course, you're selfish, Sir—it's ordained you should be so, and you have a right to it; and I hope you will be it. Several ladies have written beautiful books about the behaviour of women; and I have noticed that they are nearly all more strict on them than gentlemen are in their books. Some of the advice to women is really lovely, and likely to bring up—or perhaps I ought to say to bring down—girls so nicely!—comparing wives to servants, husbands to masters, and such like sentiments. It's curious, too, that I think it's often ladies that haven't got any husbands of their own that know the duties of wives best."

“ But, Mrs. Barr, you are really quite mistaken, I assure you !” remonstrated the chaplain. “ It is not intended or expected that women should be in the humble position you imagine—quite a mistake ; and you need not consider it at all necessary to break poor little Linny’s spirit.”

Mrs. Barr shook her head grimly.

“ Excuse me, sir ; but in this matter I am afraid I am right. I brought down Lucy to what she is now, and I must bring down Linny, or I couldn’t answer for the consequences. You don’t know what a child that is ; she’s afraid of nothing—not even of the bogie that used to keep her quiet before she found out he wasn’t anything but a name, and never came down the chimney ; and if she went on that way, and grew up so fearless, she wouldn’t be womanly at all—she’d be too full of her fun and happiness. There’s nothing so beautiful as to see females going through life in a dejected, subdued sort of way—with an ashamed look in their coun-

tenances as if they had done wrong, but of course hadn't. Keeping them at home greatly, and never letting them go to places of amusement, is a fine crusher, as you may call it; and if they can be made delicate it adds to their subjection."

"Mrs. Barr, you really are labouring under very wrong ideas respecting woman's position," declared Mr. Trydell. "We men are not the wretches you imagine. It is the duty and the aim of every Christian man to place woman in her true position, and on a perfect equality with man—of course in different spheres."

"Yes, different spheres, of course, sir," admitted Mrs. Barr. "But the difference of the spheres is very great, and the difference of the money that's gathered in the spheres is very great. With respect to that matter, wouldn't it be better to call the position of woman her hemisphere, and not a whole sphere. It might sound more humble and less upsetting—not so offensive to those gen-

lemen and ladies that hate pretensions in women."

"Mrs. Barr, really—"

"Ah! I know you feel ashamed, Mr. Trydell, and I don't blame you; but, whatever Christian men may think to their own disadvantage, there's too many of the other sort ever to agree to altering the old state of things. In other countries abroad the women are kept stricter than here, I believe, sir; at least, Sergeant Tomkins, of the Thirty-third, says that in Turkey the females have their faces covered up, which I think is going too far—quite too far. I should never wish to see Lucy going about with a pocket handkerchief tied over her mouth and nose; and I'm glad we live in a country, Mr. Trydell, where the customs respecting the management of girls are exactly what they ought to be, and not at all laughable, like as in Turkey"—and Mrs. Barr laughed heartily at Turkey.

Mr. Trydell made no reply; he was thinking, perhaps, whether the customs of his

country were all really so devoid of drollery as his hostess considered them to be.

“But, to go back to Linny, Mr. Trydell,” continued Mrs. Barr, who had done laughing at Turkey. “I hope you will assist me in bringing her up—I mean down—and making her feminine, and a good girl, and not encourage her to have a spirit.”

“I am afraid I cannot promise, Mrs. Barr; I shall, in fact, regret very much to see my poor little friend downcast or subdued.”

“Well, sir, I didn’t expect such a remark from you; indeed I didn’t.”

“Had you such an opinion of me as to suppose I should approve of harshness in the bringing of children?”

“It can’t be called harshness, sir; it’s only making children natural.”

Mr. Trydell smiled, and yet he was thinking gravely too, wondering if the owner of a certain sad, sweet face, very lovely in its subdued pensiveness of expression, which was continually haunting his fancy, had been

“brought down” in Mrs. Barr’s fashion and deprived of spirit by any particular training and discipline tending to make her womanly.

“Don’t you think, Mrs. Barr,” he said, after a pause, “that boys and girls soon grow subdued enough without any help from their elders, as they pass through life and become men and women, meeting with disappointments and cares all the way?”

“Well, with great respect, I do not,” answered Mrs. Barr, promptly. “I don’t think there’s anything equal to bringing female children well down from early youth. There’s Lucy; I brought her down with great trouble, and though she’s giddy at times, and stays out of an evening longer than she need, and seems what you call wool-gathering very often, especially of late, yet I’m bound to say she’s an excellent girl, and it’s my firm conviction that she hasn’t a thought in her heart that I don’t know, or that she would hide from me.”

Oh! poor mistaken mother!

Not finding that [all this conversation had the desired effect of brightening up Mr. Trydell's spirits, Mrs. Barr began to polish the table briskly and thoughtfully, wondering what other means she could try to make him cheerful. Gossip might answer now, perhaps. So she began, after a lengthened pause, to speak again.

"I'm told, sir, though maybe I shouldn't mention it, that it's likely one of the Miss Bouveries will soon be married."

The chaplain winced visibly, and did not cheer up in the least.

"It isn't settled which of them yet, I believe—that is, the people of Norham haven't settled it—but I suppose the lady herself knows which it is," continued Mrs. Barr.

Mr. Trydell made no remark in words.

"Very likely it may be both the Miss Bouveries, for there were two gentlemen named as going to marry one of them, and it stands to reason neither of them could have

two husbands. There's Mr. Clarke, and that handsome young officer that came lately to be edge-a-cong, and they are both considered to be likely to marry one of the young ladies; and I only wish I knew which. There's a report, too, that the Hon. Mr. Lyon is very much taken with Miss Ellinor; but I consider that only nonsense; for, though she is of as high blood as himself, I don't think it likely he'd marry a commoner, let her be ever so nice, and no fortune either."

Mrs. Barr watched her lodger's face to try the effect of this intelligence, and observed the shadow deepening over it as she went on.

"When I was out this afternoon, a little way out of town on business (I never go out, Mr. Trydell, for anything else, for I consider that a married woman with the care of a family has no right to walk out for mere health or pleasure), I saw Lord Halesby's carriage stopping at Evergreen gate; it seldom goes up to the house, it's so hard to

turn the horses in the lawn without going over the flower plots, and I knew the livery at once, though I didn't speak to the coachman, as I never liked him since one day we had only raspberry vinegar when he called for a little table his lordship had bought; and, being disappointed, I suppose, that it wasn't brandy—for we generally give the Halesby servants the best cognac—he said that Lady Halesby always sent any furniture bought from Barr up to the inferior bedrooms, which I knew very well was sheer spite, and I made answer that I didn't care where her ladyship put it, so as the things were paid for, though it wasn't altogether the truth at the same time, for I felt very much hurt at such a slight being put on Barr's work, though a falsehood I'm sure. So ever since that I don't pretend to see the carriage when it's passing; but to-day I couldn't help looking at it stopping at Evergreen, on account of what was said about young Mr. Lyon taking a fancy to Miss Ellinor, and so I wondered very much who

was in it, or who was out of it, and I would have given a good deal to know."

"And you did not know, Mrs. Barr?" asked Mr. Trydell, absently.

"No, sir. There was nobody but the coachman I speak of and one footman ; and, as I couldn't speak to the footman without pretending to see the coachman, I just passed by as if I saw nothing at all, and the carriage was gone when I returned back."

Thus ended the gossip about the carriage at Evergreen gate, and seeing Mr. Trydell look still as dejected as if somebody had been bringing him down instead of trying to cheer him up, Mrs. Barr sighed, and poked the fire vigorously, evidently considering her lodger's case was almost a hopeless one. Perhaps she had made a mistake in alluding to Mr. Lyon's admiration of Miss Bouverie, she thought. It might be that he would prefer nobody admiring her but himself. Therefore she spoke again.

"After all, sir, I think it's not likely that Mr. Lyon could ever have an idea of either of

the Miss Bouveries ; it's some great lord's daughter he will take up with ; and I often think what a nice wife Miss Ellinor would be for a gentleman, not to say rich, and living in a quiet way, respectable, but not over-dashing, and with a great deal of learning, for I hear she's very fond of reading herself—though, for that matter, people don't always make a choice of people like themselves ; but I think she'd be a great help to any gentleman that had much to do and that was very religious, for she talks beautiful sometimes to Linny about the catechism when she comes in about work for Lucy ; and, in fact, sir, I think she would make the best clergyman's wife I ever saw."

This startling piece of information had scarcely any visible effect on the chaplain. He kept looking at the fire with the same thoughtful, half-melancholy look as before, and Mrs. Barr again felt defeated. She would try nothing further as a restorative of cheerfulness that evening unless it might be that she would bring up a very "tasty" picture

of a wild huntsman which was lying "idle" below stairs, and hang it over the mantelpiece of the lodger's sitting-room, as something more interesting to look at than the burning coals in the grate. Going down, therefore, to the lower regions of the house, bearing the tea-tray, she thought she would make Lucy clean up the picture a little and brighten the frame before having it taken up to enliven Mr. Trydell's apartment, but to her surprise Lucy was not in the kitchen, where she expected to find her, nor yet in the parlour, nor out in the workshop, nor anywhere in the house. Where could she have been?

"It is very odd of Lucy to disappear in this way," thought the mother, when she had made a search all through the lower part of the house, "and such a severe night too. Very odd, indeed, and I that have just been praising her for being dutiful. I'm afraid I haven't been strict enough—haven't kept her down enough. Mr. Trydell, with all his learning and his sermons, doesn't understand

much about the way to bring up girls. I shall have to make a difference with Linny—that's one thing, and I must begin at once too. There's Barr out, and the boys too, spending money every night at those shows. I shouldn't be surprised if Lucy had gone too ; and, if so, I shall not let her out for a month, except to church on Sundays. Good gracious ! to think of her daring to go to a horrible place like a show ! Sinful and disreputable enough even for men and boys, but beyond everything wicked for females. Places of amusement of every kind are destruction for females—downright destruction !” And then, going to the hall-door Mrs. Barr found it slightly ajar, which confounded her still more. Should she close it and lock it, and so terrify the delinquent, when she should come back for admittance ?

END OF VOL. I.





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